

Bi-Weekly Update from County Administrator/Controller Kelli Scott, 12/23/13:

County offices will be closed on December 24 and 25, and also December 31 and January 1.

Best wishes to you all for a peaceful and safe holiday season!

Collective Bargaining Wrapped Up:

The Board of Commissioners ratified on December 19 new collective bargaining agreements to begin on January 1 with the ***Police Officers Association of Michigan (POAM) and the Assistant Prosecuting Attorney's Association (APAA)***. The County now has agreements for all 10 represented employee groups in place to begin the new year. With this latest round of negotiations, all county employees are now required to pay at least 20% toward the cost of their health insurance premiums if they choose the standard plan. Employees pay significantly more if they choose a more expensive plan, and less for a high deductible plan that includes a health savings account. Both of these latest agreements include minimal pay increases--from 0% to 1% over the next few years, due to the county's reduced levels of property tax and other revenues projected to continue. The POAM agreement also included steps address the group's unfunded pension liabilities. In a combined effort, the county and union members agreed to increase each sides' defined pension contribution rates to levels over and above those actuarially calculated. For the life of the three-year agreement, this will provide extra funding toward the unfunded liability balance. Contract language was also modified to reflect the new 12-hour shift schedule already implemented by Sheriff Matt Saxton during this past year.

The County's HR/Labor Relations Director, Kim Archambault, Corporation Counsel Richard Lindsey and County Administrator/Controller Kelli Scott represent the county as co-employers and partner with our elected officials to bargain with union representatives. Both the POAM and APAA contracts were successfully wrapped up before their expiration dates without requiring the engagement of outside legal counsel. For the POAM collective bargaining process, Sheriff Saxton and Undersheriff Tim Hurtt should be commended, along with POAM agent Wayne Beerbower and union stewards Jonathan Pignataro, William Huff, Bryan Gandy, and David Tendziegloski. For the APAA contract, similar commendations are due to Prosecutor David Gilbert, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Matthew Smith, and assistant prosecutors Dan Buscher, Brandon Hultink and David Hunter.

Board of Public Health Meeting 12/16/13:

The Public Health Board met on December 16 and received a presentation on the implementation of the ***Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA)*** in Calhoun County. Samantha Pearl, Executive Director of Community Healthcare Connections, and Theresa Osborn, their Director of Community Relations, provided valuable information on the expected benefits and unintended consequences of the ACA to begin on January 1. The board agenda also included a preliminary 2012-13 Fiscal year-end financial report that indicated better results than budget, due to savings from vacant positions and the time to implement new grant programs. Health Officer Jim Rutherford facilitated discussions about various other items included in his monthly update report to the Board.

At the County Board's December 19 meeting ***Amy Davis and Ronnie Sims were newly appointed*** to the Board of Health, and ***Dr. Mahesh Karamchandani, Chairman*** of the Health Board, was reappointed for another term. The next County Board of Health meeting is scheduled for ***January 27, 2014, at 8:00 a.m.*** at the Health Department Administrative Conference Room in the Toeller Building on Michigan Avenue in Battle Creek.

Road Department Updates:

Road crews were busy this past weekend battling rain, snow, sleet and ice on county roads, and they continue to address fallen branches on roads and in the right of way. The public will also notice pothole patching activities once again as numerous potholes have emerged due to the recent freeze and thaw

temperatures. Residents are reminded to drive safely during winter conditions, and look out for snow plows that may be traveling at slower speeds than other traffic.

Road Department Managing Director Jerry Peterson, County Administrator/Controller Kelli Scott and Corporation Counsel Richard Lindsey met with ***Pennfield Township*** Supervisor Rob Behnke on December 13 to discuss the development of longer-term road maintenance and reconstruction plans within the township. We are encouraged by Pennfield's and other townships' increased willingness to partner with the County Road Department as we create better long-term plans and explore funding solutions to improve the condition of our roads and bridges.

As part of the State's \$115 million transportation funding grant initiative announced on December 19, Calhoun County will benefit from two local awards. In Marshall, M-227 is slated to be resurfaced by MDOT at an estimated cost of \$4 million. Our ***Road Department was also awarded \$150,000*** to help improve local roads on a yet-to-be-determined priority basis. Our appreciation to Senator Mike Nofs and Representatives Kate Segal and Jase Bolger for their support in helping to secure these millions of dollars in road funding for Calhoun County.

The Road Department hosted their monthly Township Supervisors meeting on December 19, discussing winter operations and hearing feedback from township officials about specific issues and projects. For 2014 the meetings have been moved to Wednesday mornings, with the ***next meeting scheduled for January 22, 2014, at 9:00 a.m.*** at the Road Department office in Marshall.
