

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**Rick Robbins**, District #1  
**Debra L. Rushton**, District #2  
**William J. Bunek**, District #3  
**Ty Wessell**, District #4  
**Patricia Soutas-Little**, District #5  
**Gwenne Allgaier**, District #6  
**Melinda C. Lautner**, District #7



**Chet Janik**, County Administrator

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***Centerville Township 2022 Annual Meeting of the Electors  
Commissioner's Report for 2021-22  
Patricia Soutas-Little, County Commissioner, District #5  
Centerville and Leland Townships***

During 2021 and 2022 I represented the Board of Commissioners on the Networks Northwest Board and Executive Committee, and also the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Board and Executive Committee. I also served on the County's Building Safety and Building and Grounds Committees during this period. In addition, I chaired the Broadband Expansion Team working to enhance broadband and cellular services throughout the County.

Apart from my County assignments, I continue to serve as Chairperson for the Leelanau Early Childhood Development Commission and the Leelanau Peninsula Economic Foundation. Both are 501c3 non-profit corporations that have collaborated with the County supporting public-private projects addressing the needs of Leelanau residents in broadband, housing, and early childhood programs and services.

**2021-22 County Updates:**

**Recycling** – Thanks to Jim and Megan Munoz and Beth and Mike Grosvenor, the temporary site on the corner of Oak Street and Edwards Avenue continues to be available to residents for recycling while a permanent site is found. Two new recycling sites are available this year, one open now on the Government Center campus and the other on the Leelanau County Road Commission's grounds which will be open soon. The Solid Waste Council is offering mattress recycling this year in addition to scrap tire and hazardous waste and electronic collections. Residents can sign up now for the 2022 hazardous waste disposal by calling the County Planning Department at 231-256-9812 or emailing them at [planning@leelanau.gov](mailto:planning@leelanau.gov).

**ARPA Funds** – The Commissioners have taken a proactive approach with the \$4.2 million allocated to Leelanau County from the American Rescue Plan Act. Leelanau is the only county in Northern Michigan to date that has solicited input and proposals from its citizens

**Land Bank Fast Track Authority** – The Land Bank formed a partnership in 2021 with the Habitat for Humanity to build six homes in Maple City for local eligible families

**Broadband** – The Commissioners engaged DCS Technology Design to conduct a Rural Broadband Inventory Survey, which was completed in September and formed the building blocks for creation of a broadband plan completed recently.

The County is in the process a developing a partnership with Point Broadband, LLC, that will greatly expand broadband fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) coverage. Dialogue continues with several other Internet Service Providers to enhance broadband service options throughout the county.

DCS Technology Design has been retained to oversee the development and implementation of broadband contracts over the next two years, which is the time-line for completion of the Point Broadband contract and finalizing other broadband services.

**Cellular Towers** – A contract is in the final stages to construct a new communication tower on the Government Center campus that will enhance 911 services and cellular communication coverage for residents. The potential of building additional towers in other parts of the County is being explored, with the same goal of expanding communication.

**Cherry Capital Airport** – The Airport is jointly owned by Leelanau and Grand Traverse Counties. The Commissioners from both counties worked together to develop a new governance model that will provide greatly flexibility, as well as reduce potential liability to the Counties.

**Senior Services Department** – The Department continues to serve approximately 2,500 residents on an annual basis, ranging from in-home health care assistance, unmet financial needs, and social activities. Employees continued to distribute food to the needy on a weekly basis. A Care Coordinator and an Aging Well Resources Coordinator were added to the department.

**Benzie Leelanau District Health Department** – The BLDHD once again has done an exemplar job of combating the Covid-19 pandemic working with residents, businesses, schools and tourists encouraging them to embrace practices to ensure everyone's safety and wellbeing. Health Department staff continue to work tirelessly to see that all Leelanau residents are vaccinated that want to be.

The BLDHD's Parenting Communities early childhood program continues to expand existing program offerings, establishing new parent, infant and pediatric services which improve health and foster positive cognitive, social-emotional and physical experiences promoting infant and child development. In 2021 a Mom

Power program was added and this year a new Father and Child program is being offered.

**Financial Stability** – The County has been aggressive in dealing with its long-term liability issues. Leelanau County once again received a “clean” audit and was recognized as being one of the “best-managed counties” in Michigan. The County has no Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) liability, which is a rarity in Michigan.

**Labor contracts** – All of the employee contracts were recently ratified for an additional three years. Once again, there were no successful lawsuits or grievances against the County.

**Commission Meetings** – County Commission meetings continued to be broadcast live on YouTube and the video recordings of the meetings are available for later viewing by the public on the County website.

**Facilities Management** – A plan has been developed which will allow for a more proactive maintenance approach to dealing with issues related to the County’s buildings & grounds.