

**Leelanau County Board of Commissioners**  
**Executive Board Session – Tuesday, September 14, 2021**  
*Tentative Minutes*

*Proceedings of the meeting are being recorded (audio and video) and are not the official record of the meeting; the formally approved/accepted written copy of the minutes will be the official record of the meeting.*

Meeting called to order by Chairman William J. Bunek at 9:00 a.m. Today’s meeting is being held at the Government Center, 8527 Government Center Drive, Suttons Bay, Michigan.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was recited, followed by a moment of silence.

Prayer:

Mike Gafa, Pastor, Glen Lake Community Reformed Church.

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

Approval of Agenda:

**MOTION BY LAUTNER THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED. SECONDED BY WESSELL.**

Discussion – None.

**AYES – 7 (Lautner, Robbins, Rushton, Soutas-Little, Wessell, Allgaier, Bunek)**

**NO – 0**

**MOTION CARRIED.**

Public Comment:

The following guests spoke in person at the meeting: Victor Goldschmidt, Leelanau Township; Alma Vasquez, Suttons Bay; Barbara Burkhardt, Leland; Bruce Price, Leland Township.

Letters were received from the following individuals: Ann Schlueter, Barbara Burkhardt, Alma Vasquez, and Victor Goldschmidt.

All public comment copies can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.leelanau.gov/meetingdetails.asp?MAId=2197#handouts>

Communications, Proclamations, Presentations –

Administrator Update:

Administrator Janik introduced Deputy County Clerk Molly Peplinski, who was hired in July of 2021. Janik recognized County Clerk Michelle L. Crocker for her award she recently received from the Michigan Association of County Clerk for 25 years of outstanding service as County Clerk in Leelanau County.

Janik introduced the Equalization Department’s new Property Appraiser, James Stachnik, who was hired in August of 2021.

Senior Services Director April Missias announced that she will have two new staff members coming in. Missias stated that Victoria Maggio has been hired as the Care Coordinator, who will be starting on September 22, 2021, and Gail Carlson has been hired for the Resource Coordinator position, who will be starting the following week.

Sheriff Mike Borkovich introduced Dick and Elaine Bailey, parents of Sgt. Christopher Bailey, who recently had a life-saving rescue in August 2021. Sheriff Borkovich thanked Janik for putting together the video for the Commissioners and guests to view of the rescue. Borkovich announced that when Sgt. Bailey arrives to the meeting, he would like to have the Commissioners pause and recognize Sgt. Bailey.

Networks Northwest Agency Update:

Networks Northwest Agency Chief Executive Officer Matt McCauley gave an update with a PowerPoint.

The PowerPoint can be viewed at the following link: (pages 2-29)  
[https://www.leelanau.gov/downloads/09142021\\_executive\\_board\\_pkt\\_opt.pdf](https://www.leelanau.gov/downloads/09142021_executive_board_pkt_opt.pdf)

Commissioners thanked McCauley for the update.

Presentation Of Life Saving Award to Sgt. Chris Bailey:

Sheriff Borkovich recognized Sgt. Chris Bailey with an award for outstanding service within Leelanau County. Sgt. Bailey received a standing ovation from Commissioners and guests.

Indigenous Peoples Day – Friday, October 1, 2021:

Commissioner Ty Wessell read the Leelanau County Resolution #2021-XXXX, A Resolution to Recognize the First Day of October as Indigenous Peoples Day.

Action Items –

Veterans Affairs – Approval of Grant Agreement Between Leelanau County, Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, and the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency:  
Administrator Janik informed Commissioners regarding the grant and approval process.

**MOTION BY WESSELL TO RECOMMENED TO THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO APPROVE THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE GRANT AGREEMENT BETWEEN LEELANAU COUNTY, THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERAN’S AFFAIRS, AND THE MICHIGAN VETERANS AFFAIRS AGENCY, AS PRESENTED, FOR \$55,240.72. SECONDED BY LAUTNER.**

Discussion – None.

**AYES – 7 (Wessell, Allgaier, Bunek, Lautner, Robbins, Rushton, Soutas-Little)**  
**NO – 0** **RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition Leadership Proposal:

Janik invited Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition Consultant Greg McMorrow and Leelanau Investing for Teens (LIFT) Director Rebekah TenBrink to the table to present.

Janik explained the contract between the Coalition and McMorrow, which is ending. Janik stated that McMorrow has recommended to the Coalition to continue the leadership contract with LIFT as an independent contractor.

**MOTION BY RUSHTON TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO WAIVE ITS POLICY ON BID REQUIREMENTS AND ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN LEELANAU COUNTY AND LEELANAU INVESTING FOR TEENS (LIFT) FOR CONSULTANT SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE LEELANAU COUNTY SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION COALITION, AS PRESENTED; FUNDS TO COME FROM #101.100.101.967.019. SECONDED BY ALLGAIER.**

Discussion – Janik, McMorrow, and TenBrink answered Commissioner questions.

**AYES – 7 (Rushton, Soutas-Little, Wessell, Allgaier, Bunek, Lautner, Robbins)**  
**NO – 0** **RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

Commissioner Rushton thanked McMorrow for all his hard work and leadership.

Chairman Bunek called for a break at 10:24 a.m., and called the meeting back to order at 10:35 a.m.

Sheriff's Office – Purchase of Cellebrite Software:

Sheriff Borkovich and Undersheriff James Kiessel were present.

**MOTION BY ALLGAIER TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO ALLOW THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE TO PURCHASE A CELLEBRITE 4PC SOFTWARE SYSTEM AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$3,000.00 TO REPLACE AND IN LIEU OF REPAIR OF THE CURRENT CELLEBRITE UFED TOUCH 2 DEVICE; FUNDS TO COME FROM ACCOUNT NUMBER #101.225.301.970.010. SECONDED BY RUSHTON AND WESSELL.**

Discussion – None.

**AYES – 7 (Allgaier, Bunek, Lautner, Robbins, Rushton, Soutas-Little, Wessell)**  
**NO – 0** **RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

Sheriff's Office – MMRMA Grant Application Update, BOLA Wrap Device:

Sheriff Borkovich and Lt. Todd Roush were present for the agenda item. Lt. Roush informed Commissioners of what a BOLA Wrap Device does to incapacitate an individual, who may want cause harm to themselves or someone, without using lethal force.

Roush continued that the cost is \$1,935.00 and is an authorized expense within MMRMA grants, and once the invoice is paid, he will be submitting for reimbursement.

Chairman Bunek stated that no action is needed at this time on this agenda item, as it was just an update.

Chairman Bunek amended the agenda and moved #14, Administration – Tower contracts update to #4, Emergency Management – Item d.

Emergency Management – Agreement with the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians for CAD Services:

Emergency Management Director Matt Ansorge was present for Commissioner questions.

**MOTION BY WESSELL TO RECOMMEND THAT THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APPROVE THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN LEELANAU COUNTY AND THE GRAND TRAVERSE OF OTTAWA AND CHIPPEWA INDIANS FOR THE USE OF THE MOTOROLA FLEX SYSTEM FOR 10 YEARS, AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY LAUTNER.**

Discussion – None.

**AYES – 7 (Wessell, Allgaier, Bunek, Lautner, Robbins, Rushton, Soutas-Little)  
NO – 0 RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

Emergency Management – Approval of FY 2022 Emergency Management Performance Grant:  
Director Ansorge was present for Commissioner questions.

**MOTION BY LAUTNER TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO ALLOW THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD TO SIGN THE EMPG WORK AGREEMENT AND OTHER DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THIS GRANT AGREEMENT, AS PRESENTED, AND TO ALLOW THE OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TO SUBMIT ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES FOR THE REQUIRED QUARTERLY REPORTS. SECONDED BY RUSHTON AND WESSELL.**

Discussion – None.

**AYES – 7 (Lautner, Robbins, Rushton, Soutas-Little, Wessell, Allgaier, Bunek)  
NO – 0 RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

Emergency Management – Disassembled Tower Sale Recommendation:

Director Ansorge informed Commissioners that Radio North has reached out requesting to purchase from the County for the US Forest Service the 100 ft. tower that was disassembled from the Northport area and has been sitting since 2016. Ansorge continued that the tower is without a foundation and feels that the most the County could receive for it is about \$2,500.00. He stated that Radio North offered the County \$1,500.00 and that after consulting with Administrator Janik, he countered with \$2,000.00. Ansorge stated that if the County wanted to go out for a sale through bids, he thinks the County would receive less than the \$2,000.00 counter offer.

Janik informed Commissioners that at this time there is not a formal proposal from Radio North to purchase the tower, but he is hoping to have something by the Regular Session on Tuesday, September 21, 2021, for Board action.

Administration – Tower Contracts Update:

Director Ansorge informed Commissioners that there have been quite a few questions and answers. Ansorge continued that the County had almost zero through the first two processes for the proposed new tower site at the Governmental Center. He stated now there is interest out there, which he is very excited about, and there are now four (4) intent to bid proposals submitted to the Administrator's Office. Ansorge said that he is cautiously optimistic that both the Governmental site and the addition to the Maple City site will see progress.

Commissioner Wessell asked how is it coming with contracts for Internet Service Providers on existing towers?

Ansorge replied that the Agri-Valley contracts have been approved by the County’s attorney, and are now in place for equipment on the Omena, Central, and Maple City Towers.

Commissioners thanked Ansorge for the update.

Planning/Community Development – Housing Affordability Restrictions:

Planning Director Trudy Galla was present.

**MOTION BY ALLGAIER TO RECOMMEND TO THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO APPROVE THE SIGNING OF ALL QUIT CLAIM DEEDS FOR PROPERTIES DEVELOPED WITH AFFORDABILITY RESTRICTIONS AS PART OF GRANT AGREEMENTS BETWEEN LEELANAU COUNTY AND THE MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (MSHDA). SECONDED BY WESSELL.**

Discussion – None.

**AYES – 7 (Allgaier, Bunek, Lautner, Robbins, Rushton, Soutas-Little, Wessell)  
NO – 0 RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

Commissioner Lautner thanked Galla.

Planning/Community Development – Approval of the Leelanau County Capital Improvement Plan (CIP):

Planning Director Trudy Galla was present.

**MOTION BY LAUTNER TO RECOMMEND TO THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO APPROVE (OR ACCEPT) THE 2022 THROUGH 2027 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) FOR LEELANAU COUNTY. SECONDED BY ROBBINS.**

Discussion – None.

**Ayes – 7 (Lautner, Robbins, Rushton, Soutas-Little, Wessell, Allgaier, Bunek)  
NO – 0 RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

Prosecuting Attorney – Title IV-D:

Prosecutor Joseph Hubbell was present.

**MOTION BY SOUTAS-LITTLE TO RECOMMEND TO THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO APPROVE AMENDMENT #1 TO AGREEMENT #CSPA17-45002-A22, BETWEEN THE COUNTY OF LEELANAU AND THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$137,085.02 FOR A TWO-YEAR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2023; FUNDS TO BE DEPOSITED IN #101.000.000.564.000. SECONDED BY WESSELL.**

Discussion – None.

**AYES – 7 (Soutas-Little, Wessell, Allgaier, Bunek, Lautner, Robbins, Rushton)  
NO – 0 RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

Senior Services – Memorandum of Understanding, ShareCare of Leelanau, Inc.:

Senior Services Director April Missias was present.

**MOTION BY WESSELL TO RECOMMEND TO THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO APPROVE A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN LEELANAU COUNTY SENIOR SERVICES AND SHARECARE OF LEELANAU, INC., FOR CARE COORDINATION SERVICES BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2021, PENDING CORPORATE COUNSEL REVIEW AND APPROVAL. SECONDED BY ROBBINS.**

Discussion – None

**AYES – 7 (Wessell, Allgaier, Bunek, Lautner, Robbins, Rushton, Soutas-Little)**  
**NO – 0** **RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

Senior Services – Revised Agreement with ShareCare of Leelanau, Inc.:

Director Missias was present.

**MOTION BY WESSELL TO RECOMMEND TO THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO APPROVE LEELANAU COUNTY SENIOR SERVICES TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH SHARECARE OF LEELANAU, INC., TO PROVIDE VOLUNTEER COORDINATION SERVICES FOR UP TO \$51,000.00, BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2021, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2022. SECONDED BY ROBBINS.**

Discussion – None.

**AYES – 7 (Wessell, Allgaier, Bunek, Lautner, Robbins, Rushton, Soutas-Little)**  
**NO – 0** **RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

Information Technology – SQL Server Software Upgrade:

I.T. Director Ron Plamondon was present.

**MOTION BY LAUTNER TO RECOMMEND TO THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO WAIVE ITS POLICY ON BID REQUIREMENTS AND APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF A CURRENT VERSION OF MICROSOFT SQL FROM CDWG UNDER THE GSA CONTRACT FOR \$4,651.03, WITH FUNDS TO COME FROM DATA PROCESSING FUND #636. SECONDED BY RUSHTON.**

Discussion – None.

**AYES – 7 (Lautner, Robbins, Rushton, Soutas-Little, Wessell, Allgaier, Bunek)**  
**NO – 0** **RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

Equalization – Approval 2021 L-4029 Tax Rate Request:

Interim Equalization Director Andrew Giguere was present for the agenda item.

**MOTION BY SOUTAS-LITTLE TO RECOMMEND THAT THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APPROVE A MILLAGE RATE THAT DOES NOT EXCEED THE MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE MILLAGE LEVY (INSERTED IN COLUMN 9) AND PLACE THAT MILLAGE RATE IN COLUMN 10 AS THE MILLAGE RATE REQUESTED TO BE LEVIED ON DECEMBER 1, 2021. SECONDED BY WESSELL.**

Discussion –

*MOTION AMENDED BY BUNEK TO AMEND TO RECOMMEND THAT THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APPROVE A MILLAGE RATE CHANGE FOR THE COUNTY ALLOCATED TO 3.3788. SECONDED BY LAUTNER.*

**MOTION AMENDED BY BUNEK TO AMEND TO RECOMMEND THAT THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APPROVE TO REDUCE THE EARLY CHILDHOOD MILLAGE TO BE LEVIED AT RATE OF .000. SECONDED BY RUSHTON.**

Commissioner Wessell stated he would like to ask for a break while Commissioners look at the first amendment and see what dollars Chairman Bunek is talking about right before the Board has discussion. Wessell continued that it did not happen last time and he thinks the Board should do that.

Chairman Bunek agreed to a break.

Commissioner Soutas-Little stated that if during the break Chairman Bunek could identify his reasons for eliminating the Early Childhood Millage?

Chairman Bunek replied that certainly he would do that after the break, but not during.

Commissioner Soutas-Little requested that Chairman Bunek could put his reasons in writing?

Chairman Bunek called for a break taken at 11:17 a.m. and resumed the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Giguere stated that after discussions with Suttons Bay Township Deputy Treasurer Cathy Hartesvelt in regards to the L-4029 presented today for the County allocated operating tax that those taxes have already been levied in July of 2021, and can't be changed until April of 2022.

Chairman Bunek requested to remove the motion to amend the motion for the County allocated, road, senior services and that early childhood be changed to zero.

Commissioner Wessell stated that Chairman Bunek couldn't amend an amendment but could pull the amendment.

Chairman Bunek withdrew the motion to amend to recommend that the Leelanau County Board of Commissioners approve a millage rate change for the County allocated to 3.3778, with support from Commissioner Lautner.

*MOTION AMENDED BY BUNEK TO AMEND TO RECOMMEND THAT THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APPROVE THE MILLAGE FOR ROAD, SENIOR AND REDUCE THE EARLY CHILDHOOD MILLAGE TO BE LEVEIED AT A RATE OF .000., WITH SUPPORT FROM COMMISSIONER RUSHTON.*

Discussion –

*MOTION AMENDED BY SOUTAS-LITTLE TO AMEND TO PROPOSE THAT THE ACTION ON THIS ISSUE BE POSTPONED UNTIL A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE ELIMINATION OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD MILLAGE THAT THE VOTERS VOTED FOR, AND REQUEST AN ATTORNEY OPINON. SECONDED BY WESSELL.*

Discussion – Commissioner Soutas-Little stated that she doesn't believe the Board of Commissioners can eliminate a millage that was voted for by the Leelanau County voters.

Commissioner Rushton questioned if there were already three amendments.

Chairman Bunek replied that the original motion was by Commissioner Soutas-Little and that he made an amendment. Bunek continued that he didn't think Commissioner Soutas-Little could amend her own motion.

***MOTION AMENDED BY WESSELL TO AMEND TO PROPOSE THAT THE ACTION ON THIS ISSUE BE POSTPONED UNTIL A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE ELIMINATION OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD MILLAGE THAT THE VOTERS VOTED FOR, AND REQUEST AN ATTORNEY OPINION. SECONDED BY ALLGAIER.***

Discussion – Commissioner Wessell stated that he just flabbergasted. (Said to Commissioner Lautner, “Put your hand down while I speak and then I won't raise mine when I speak”). Wessell said that at every meeting there's some “gotcha surprise motion made” by somebody. He continued that the voters approved an early childhood program and Chairman Bunek didn't just make a motion to reduce the millage, but made a motion to eliminate the entire program. Wessell said that he can't even believe it, and that he can't believe that the Board at this point is sitting at the table that where the chairman of the board surprises Commissioners in a meeting and states, “I'm going to propose secretly to eliminate the entire program.” He continued that he thinks that it is out-of-this world crazy.

Commissioner Soutas-Little said that she asked Chairman Bunek for his reasons in writing. “Did you do that during the break?”

Chairman Bunek replied, “I have, yes.”

Commissioner Soutas-Little asked, “May we see them?”

Chairman Bunek replied, “All right, in a minute, we're still in discussion here. Yes.”

Commissioner Soutas-Little replied that she thought this was part of the discussion.

Chairman Bunek replied that it will be.

Commissioner Soutas-Little stated that since she made the original motion and has the floor, and she along with Ty, are stunned. She said that in August, the Board had a very good presentation on this program, and it's been very successful. Soutas-Little continued the program is reaching a lot of families and their children, and there are plans to expand to Saturday programs. She said there are plans to initiate this year an Hispanic-speaking program for just Hispanic kids. Soutas-Little stated that the program is reaching parents, and they have conducted home visits.

Commissioner Soutas-Little continued that in 2020 the program was not able to do much of anything, but did reach out which was done by telephone. She stated there were some urgent home visits that were required for the sanity of a parent, and this year they are finally back on the amount that they would spend on a December funding ratio so that the County doesn't have to advance any funding dollars. She continued that this will be the millage amount going forward, and she can't imagine why Chairman Bunek would want to eliminate a program that is so successful in reaching so many families. She said the program is providing such an important service at this time, and Chairman Bunek hasn't provided reasons before the Board got into this illuminating why Chairman Bunek thought it was important. She stated that she is looking forward to hearing the reasons and is appalled and stunned by Chairman Bunek's action as a member of the Health Board. She said that at this time Chairman Bunek should step down as a Health Board member.

Commissioner Lautner stated that she hardly knows where to start. Lautner said that she knew the Board was going to look at the amounts today and she was going to make an amendment, but she missed the opportunity because she was going to ask that at least roll back the early childhood education dollars. She stated that based on the very fact that she doesn't think this



program has been so successful. She continued that Commissioners did hear the presentation earlier this summer and the numbers just were not there, but also there's been so many other programs put into place at other levels of government. Lautner said she thinks that there will be a trickling on down to our County very soon, so she is interested in hearing Chairman Bunek's reasons for going to zero. She said that she thinks she may know why, and would like to hear the reason.

Commissioner Allgaier stated that she too is stunned, and that countless studies have shown that when young children are worked with before they get to school, that they become more successful adults are. Allgaier continued that if socialization skills are taught starting at two-, three-, and four-year-old's countless studies show those children are more successful in school. She said that the Board has just committed \$30,000 to a substance abuse coalition to work focusing on high school kids, so let's make sure there are fewer kids that need that kind of support in high school. Allgaier continued that Commissioners pride themselves on working with the families in our community, and want the best for the children here, which includes them becoming successful adults. She said that if the voters of this County stated they wanted this support, and for the Board to pull it back then it seems the Commissioners are slapping the face of the voters. Allgaier reiterated that this action is a slap in the face. She continued that the County and the voters were invested in the beginning of the program, and it's incredibly wasteful to now just scrap it, because it would be a waste of the dollars already spent. Allgaier stated that she sure hopes the Board of Commissioners will support the will of the people of this County, and support the youth of our county in a way that's been proven to be incredibly effective.

Commissioner Rushton stated that she just wanted to say that she has had nothing but complaints about this "over-taxation" for this particular item, because there are so many programs and agencies available out there to serve the same exact needs. She said it is a redundancy in this County. Rushton continued that she would also like to point out how ironic it is that now there's a request for reasons and explanations when this was put on the table from the beginning. She said that she repeatedly asked week after week for numbers, programming, planning, and was told, "Well, you'll just have to pass it in order to see it," or some such verbiage as that. Rushton stated that she finds it really ironic that all of a sudden, now they want to know what the reason is, and the reason is because it's a redundancy in the county. She said that there are other programs out there available, and the citizens are complaining about having this added tax. Rushton continued that it seems as though that Commissioners only listening to one side of the citizens in our community and not all of them.

Chairman Bunek said he would like to now address it. Bunek stated that the number one reason is that if anyone has looked at the "Quebec Study", which there is a universal type of early childhood development, that it actually made it worse. He continued that there were more problems and a poor program creates more problems when you do that with the youth. Bunek said so if you look at the Quebec Study, and since the County program has had such a hard time getting started that he believes it's becoming a poor program and would follow the Quebec Study. He said that number two is that it takes from the elderly and the poor and gives to the better off, because there are no criteria. Bunek continued that the third thing would be that Commissioners asked to go out for bids for this, but instead the Board has given it to, at no bid contract, to the "mental health". He stated that he feels it's not being done in a very efficient manner. Bunek continued that the fourth thing would be that Commissioners have been told

that “educational”, early childhood education is illegal and the County can't do that. He said that it was called early childhood development and somehow the Board is doing the same thing because it is being put into each school, so he states that now it's becoming early childhood education. Bunek stated that the fifth thing would be that only 17% of the voters voted for this. He said that this is not some kind of mandate, and it stated up to this amount. Bunek said, “The Board of Commissioners has the right to change it rather than up to whatever was voted on, and when you only have 17, I've certainly had many more people, and part of it was how it was instituted.” He continued, “It was brought to this board on a four (4) to three (3) vote, forced at a date when no one knew about it, they were working, and so it got what it did, which the educational vote and that was it”. Bunek said that it was also mentioned earlier that there's a redundancy, there's duplication of childcare, and education. He stated that you have NMCAA, the health department, which already does preschool and prenatal, schools have early childhood education, those that have been advertised, the smart program, and libraries. Bunek stated that even today there is a pre-K program going on in Suttons Bay, along with 4-H, which he feels is tremendous redundancy, and so in all of those, he doesn't see any need for this program at all.

Commissioner Wessell stated that some of what Chairman Bunek stated, he doesn't even want to speak to it. Wessell said that clearly, he disagrees with every point Chairman Bunek made. He continued that this Board through the budget process didn't even talk much about adding half a million dollars of expenses to the budget next year without increasing any services to citizens. He continued that it was just people coming with a surprise motion, surprise amendments, and their own biases. Wessell stated it's \$455,628.00 of budgetary expenses in addition to the increases in the cost of doing business, and Commissioners didn't even debate it. He said, “But now we want to take a program that our voters said they wanted to have, and in a surprise motion in today's meeting, we hear that you not only want to reduce it, but you want to eliminate it.” Wessell continued that he would ask that Commissioners take a break because he doesn't even know that, and would like a legal opinion. He said he feels that he doesn't even know that the Board can totally eliminate this program by Board action. Wessell stated that he would like to ask the Administrator and the Chairman to call the attorney and get a ruling on that. He stated that Commissioners can debate the rest of Chairman Bunek's merits that he thinks are misled and misinformed, but he first would like to see if it's legal because he doesn't believe it is.

Chairman Bunek stated that first of all, it wouldn't eliminate it. Bunek said there are hundreds of thousands of dollars in the bank for early childhood at this time that hasn't been used that was collected last year. He continued that it has the money to sustain it for as long as it can, and it's false that it would end.

Commissioner Wessell asked, “Are you denying my request to get a legal opinion?”

Chairman Bunek replied, “Yes, I am, and we have a week to get that.”

Commissioner Wessell requested a point of order. Wessell said he has a right as a Commissioner to ask for more information at this meeting, and he stated that before Commissioner's waste time talking about it that he would like a legal opinion. He continued that it is a responsible action from a commissioner, and he challenges the Chairman's right overrule it.

Chairman Bunek said that no, this is a recommendation to the Board next week, and there is a week to get that opinion.

Commissioner Wessell re-iterated that he would like a legal opinion.

Chairman Bunek replied, "We will get it. I think that's a fine request and we have a week to get that."

Commissioner Wessell said, "I disagree with your action. If you would've done what's responsible and not surprised us, we could have come to this meeting prepared for this. This is a "surprise gotcha action", Mr. Chairman, that is irresponsible. The evidence you present, it is evidence that we debated two years ago. You need to read the literature; you need to get yourself educated about the issue. You can't just sit there and spout out mistruths and false information and accept us to take action on it. You are not a childhood expert; you are not a consumer of the research. I challenge what she presented to us today, it's like the meeting we had last week on mask. We spout out stuff that's not true and then we make decisions based on truths. It makes no sense, Mr. Chairman; it makes no sense."

Commissioner Rushton said, "Quite frankly it has appeared that anytime anybody puts a motion on the table, that it is now a surprise; we didn't know about it ahead of time." It's irresponsible, on and on and on. Here's the problem; every motion that is presented to this board is a surprise. We don't, in the back room, decide who's going to make a motion or change a motion or make an amendment, so they're all surprises. If you want to have a workshop before every executive meeting, I guess we can do that, but your rhetoric is a little bit ridiculous. And quite frankly, I'm getting tired of it being accused of being irresponsible, unreliable and everything else that you put out there on the table, so I'm getting a little tired of that, exactly. See? Who cares? You do have a right to have an attorney opinion and I do agree with that, you got a whole week to get it, but there's no reason we have to stop this Board meeting because, as you well know, this is executive it's workshop, its conversation, it's open for discussion, say what you will, we have a difference of opinion. Seventeen percent of the voters put this on the ballot, approved the ballot initiative, Seventeen percent, a lot more citizens in this County don't want this. And that's a reality that you have to come to realize as well, there are some that want it and some that don't."

Commissioner Allgaier said, "I'm really concerned at the willingness we're showing to throw out the vote of the voters. We have a process in this country where we have a date, we have items on the ballot and citizens can come vote. So, because not enough people showed up, you want to throw out this vote? That's really very, very, very curious. I believe the way to recall this vote is to have another vote and have people try again. Maybe you need to get some folks out. And what I'm anticipating is you're going to say nobody knew about it. Well, you know what? We all have a responsibility as citizens to stay informed. There was a big effort made to talk about this, to let people know, if people chose not to go vote that day, that was their choice. So, the people have spoken in one of the most important forms in our democratic system, we held a vote. To ignore that or say it didn't count, or it didn't go the way I wanted, so we don't have to count it, that's dangerous, that's a slap in the face to our voters. So, if there's an issue that we don't like and we don't like the way it turned out, are we going to do the same thing? Well, we

didn't think that was fair, that was ridiculous, we're not going to count that. That's a very dangerous, dangerous precedent, Mr. Bunek."

Giguere stated the millage that is being discussed, the early childhood millage, will come off in December 2024, which was only approved until then, and unless it's approved again there will be another vote held at some point to maintain it or to have it fall off.

Chairman Bunek said, "I think we all know."

Commissioner Allgaier said, "So thank you for that, and I'd like to continue. So, give it a chance. Another comment you made is; they weren't very successful this year. Well, substance abuse stated because of COVID, we weren't able to do much. Hello? So, should we not give them any money? Well, you know what? You didn't do much last year. How many other programs didn't do much last year because of COVID? Give me a break."

Commissioner Soutas-Little said, "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All motions aren't a surprise. For the executive committee, we get an executive packet that's sent out the Friday before that lays out information and it also comes with suggested motions. I do appreciate, and thank you for laying out your reasons. I would like to go back to some of the other things that have been said here, and that is we've forgotten the "start" of the early childhood millage came from the early childhood committee, which was 42 members who spent four and a half months researching. And it was comprised of parents, grandparents, state, federal programs, mental health, physical health, economics, I mean, churches, every conceivable person who had a stakeholder interest in early childhood participated, and they did an incredible amount of work. And it was the opinion of this body, this 42-member committee, that the program that was put forward was the best program to go with because it was the best bang for the buck and it served the most people. And putting it in the department of health made sense, because that allowed it to be integrated with so many other programs that support families. So, the whole thing was excellent, and when the presentation was made here, you all were very impressed with it. And you complimented and your comments were... You should go back and listen to the tape. Your comments were very, very supportive. I don't think the health department wanted to be caught up in a pandemic, but even though they were, they still were able to implement this, which is quite amazing. Now they're adding two new people because the need and the requests have risen. And they've only been able to really operate since June. When we talk about this being early childhood education, it is not, and that's been made clear every time the health department is reported, it was made clear in the millage. This wasn't some runaround to perpetuate education programs."

Commissioner Soutas-Little continued; "This is social, emotional development, it is all kinds of things that are not under the purview of education. It's for the development of a child to make them better prepared for school. It is operated in part in some of the school facilities, because that's how they reach out to the parents. They're not doing a school curriculum, they are doing home visits to support the parent where they are, they're doing play groups to socialize children and to give parents an opportunity to talk while their kids are learning through play in a sense, learning to interact with each other. Seventeen percent of the voters voted for this, that's, as commissioner Allgaier said, who showed up and it wasn't for want of publicizing it, the committee that was providing information on the early childhood millage met with every

township that would allow us to be on their agenda, and Solon Township did not. We met with all the different groups, I mean, met everywhere we possibly could. And in fact, the Enterprise said it was the best run, most honest, transparent campaign that had been, and that they had seen. We talked on both sides of the benefits of early childhood, we presented data. And there were signs posted throughout the county, "Don't vote for this". You, Mr. Chairman, and Melinda Lautner presented a forum in Elmwood Township saying, "Don't vote for this." And there were a lot of letters from select members of the community saying, "Don't vote for this." So, to say that people didn't know about it, is really a misnomer. I mean, they did know about it and people who cared came out and voted and they supported it. And it was a lot of the young people in our County who did that because they see this through a different lens than you do. They see this as something that's really important. They understand the literature in early childhood, they are working all day, they want their children to have a quality early childhood experience. This program provides that, many of the programs that you mentioned, like the library programs and that where the early childhood are, some of those are being provided by these staff, through the health department, you may not know that."

Commissioner Soutas-Little added, "They also are involved in all of the other programs that you mentioned, because they're integrated because this program provides things that those programs do not. So again, I appreciate your putting your points out there; I couldn't disagree with you more. It does show that your view on this is limited. And I respect that because that's your opinion, but what we're basing this on today is opinion, not fact, and as a scientist with a scientific background, I look for facts and there were a lot of facts that came out and a lot of literature reviews in the putting together of that recommendation for the millage. So, I don't know what more to say, except that for this is a situation where we're going to take a vote where supposedly the votes don't count and the real vote will be held next week. And I'm hopeful that all of the parents throughout this County let you know what they feel. I hear nothing but positive comments about the program, Commissioner Rushton. I am sure there are people who feel that they have other priorities, that they'd rather see the funds spent differently, but this is a program that our younger parents care about and want and got out and voted for. So, I hope that they make their voices heard. Thank you."

Commissioner Lautner said, "Well, I wasn't going to touch on a lot, but I see it come out because as we've swayed from what the question is, but since it's been brought up, I will mention it. You can talk all you want about a fair election. That fair election was deliberately done in an off-election time to get the results it got and there's no questioning about that. Have we heard from a lot of people who were not following it? Yes, we have. I know my district voted it down. I know Commissioner Robbins' district voted it down. I know Commissioner Rushton's district voted it down and I do believe Commissioner Bunek's district voted it down. So, we do operate in districts. I know we represent our districts and generally as a whole, we do the best we can as we move forward. Someone mentioned redundancy and so before I get to that, I'm going to talk about how the election was done too. And I think there was a lot of you can call it an honest election all you want. But I do know our director of health at the health department was talking out of both sides of her mouth. I know that personally, because I was talking to her personally several times throughout this, and there was a different message being told to me, from what the department was actually doing. So, we can talk all we want about that, but that's just fact. So, redundancy, I see that early childhood put out a survey a while back and many people called me quite alarmed by what this survey was doing. And it

began to remind me of when we put a millage out there for senior services some years ago, and we said, "Wow, what are you going to do with this money, if you get this money for Senior Services?" And, "We will find programs." And as we know that ended up being just an absolute disaster."

Commissioner Lautner continued, "So then I look at the survey you put out for early childhood education with monthly parent nights, social educational events, quarterly parent nights, annual parent nights, monthly family community nights, quarterly family community nights, annual community family nights. Playgroup's... redundancy, breastfeeding, infant-toddler nutrition, managing behavioral issues, managing parent stress, understanding your child, learning through play, infant child safety, immunizations, dental health budgeting, school readiness, positive discipline, food, housing. Do you want housing or rental assistance? Do you want utility assistance? How about health insurance, referrals for medical, mental health or a dental, assistance finding employment? Do you believe we had just a fantastic presentation on that today back? Car repairs. Can we help you with your car repair? Child and baby supplies, can we help you with family planning? What other in-person playgroups do you want? What other educational opportunities in classes do you want? And it goes on and on. So, you now as somebody mentioned, we asked, what else, what have we missed? What other things can we help you with? So, we asked at the time, basically we accused early childhood of the fact that they would be moving into these things. And we were told, "Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, they won't be doing that." And here it is. I think that Will brought up a very good point in that there are numbers, dollars in their budget to run this program, I think this will level it out. Right now, there's more dollars that can be spent because there hasn't been the numbers. So, this would be looked at again in a year, am I correct? We would look at this millage rated again in a year?"

Giguere answered, "Correct."

Commissioner Lautner continued, "So, there's hundreds of thousands of dollars to run this program this next year. So, this would be looked at again this year. Maybe it would be a different story or next year maybe it would be a different story then, maybe the numbers would be different, maybe community support would be different, at any rate. So that is all for now, Mr. Chairman."

Commissioner Robbins said, "What are the numbers? Does anybody have the numbers? How many children are we taking care of right now?"

Commissioner Soutas-Little said, "They were in the report from August."

Commissioner Robbins said, (while looking at Commissioner Soutas-Little) "I'm asking you."

Commissioner Soutas-Little responded that she didn't know.

Commissioner Lautner said, "11."

Commissioner Robbins said, "If either of you are on the Health Board, do you know?"

Commissioner Soutas-Little stated that she doesn't know the numbers, but there were quite a few. She stated that she knows from June to July they interviewed some, but she doesn't remember.

Commissioner Robbins said, "100 or so?"

Commissioner Soutas-Little responded that Commissioner Robbins should bring it up on his computer because it is sitting right there and go to presentation, as they are in there.

Commissioner Robbins said that he is asking because he is not taking sides here, he is just trying to get the facts. He continued that everyone talks about facts, and that's what he is trying to do.

Chairman Bunek stated that he remembers there were 77 children and 23 families, and those are the figures they had this summer that got involved into the programs.

Commissioner Wessell said, "Thank you. I want to respond to Commissioner Rushton's comment about she was getting tired of hearing my statement about irresponsibility. I would remind us all that several months ago I came before this Board of Commissioners and said, "I'm uncomfortable with how we're doing business together. We ought to take some time at the end of each meeting and chat about how'd the meeting go? How are we treating each other?" Commissioner Rushton said at that time, "Frankly, Ty, I don't care what you think about how I'm doing at the meeting."

Commissioner Rushton said, "And why did I say that? Because it's the voters that make that decision, not you."

Commissioner Wessell continued, "My concern is about the motion that's on the table. First, the manner in which it was presented, I think it makes no sense to surprise us. I think that is not responsible. I think it should be presented as something we've had weekly, several times a week, all summer. There could have been some advanced notice, so I'm opposed to the nature of it. I'm also very opposed to our tendency to refuse to learn about anything in terms of a knowledge base, and whether we're talking about family planning or whether we're talking about COVID or whether we're talking about early childhood or whether we're talking about whatever it is we're talking about, we all come in with our own belief systems and then we spout those out and then the next person shares their belief system. So, we never get smarter, we never learn. I'm very concerned about my concern personally, that I don't have a chair that represents a board of commissioners. I have a Republican chair of this commission that 100% of the time is to the right of where I am, because he is only the chair, I believe, of the Republican commissioners. And the fourth concern I share, and I had this last week and I wasn't going to say it because of the irresponsible statements, I think, that have been made about COVID and masks. But now we've got the same thing with another health department issue, the same person that came to the health department board two months ago and said, "I'm concerned that 9% of the prenatal healthcare in this County is not up to standard." Part of this program is to address that, but the chair of this commission is our representative of the health department. And last week we dismantled the mask issue and ruled against it, and this week, the early childhood program. I do not believe that you represent me on the health board. I don't think you represent this County well on the health board. I can't do anything about you

being chair of this commission, but I sincerely ask that you remove yourself from the health board.”

Commissioner Allgaier said, “I want to comment on the statement that someone just made, the voters make the decision, but somehow we’re going to discount that with this action here. So, in this case, it doesn’t matter what the voters say. I’m very, very, very concerned at the disregard for the results of a fair vote of our citizens. Very, very concerned.”

Commissioner Soutas-Little said, “First off, my apologies to Commissioner Robbins, I was short with you and I didn’t mean to do that, just showing the stress of the meeting. So, please accept my apologies, the numbers you were looking for in the report, they reported 123 kids from 57 families have participated in parenting community activities, and those were unduplicated numbers. And that was between 14th when they started it on July 30th and they were beginning to see additional increases. They were able to restart their home visiting program at the end of April, and they have 18 families now receiving home visits, which is an increase from nine in April, end of April when they started, 95 households receive their monthly newsletters. So those were the numbers that they gave us then, which was the first part of August. And I know from conversations with Michelle Klein, the Director of Personal Health, that they’ve continued to see increases to the point where they’re now adding staff to accommodate additional parents that are interested.”

Commissioner Rushton said, “Mr. Bunek, I believe has been chairman of this board for at least the last six years or pretty close to six years. His performance as a chairman has not changed over the years. I think the comments coming from this Board are self-serving and really kind of shameful and disrespectful. This chairman, as you all have observed, has done his best to be a board chair to all these commissioners. As a matter of fact, when you throw politics into it, I can say he calls on the other side more than he calls on this side. He’ll call on the other side twice before he’ll even let me say a word, I can document that. So, I think the accusations against our chair really shows the character of the person who’s giving it. As far as early childhood, one of the most important things is that I hear from the constituents are, I wouldn’t have a problem if I was serving those that couldn’t afford it, but being on a fixed income and I have to support early childhood development for parents, both parents working and I struggle, there was no thought given to that for our seniors, especially. He’ll call on the other side twice before he’ll even let me say a word, I can document that. So, we’re “taking money from the poor” to supplement or subsidize, not only the poor, the middle class, but the wealthy. So, there’s a problem up and down the ladder. And some of these programs that you mentioned, were these programs not already in place with the health department, just to a lesser degree?”

Commissioner Soutas-Little replied, “No.”

Commissioner Rushton said, “Oh really?”

Commissioner Lautner replied, “Oh yes, they were.”

Commissioner Rushton said, “Well.”

Commissioner Lautner replied, “Yes, they were, I just read a bunch.”



Chairman Bunek reminded Commissioners that Commissioner Rushton had the floor.

Commissioner Lautner replied, "So sorry."

Commissioner Rushton continued, "Yeah, well, it seems to me that these programs were already in place. We were doing in-house evaluations, that I know for sure. I can mention a few other, but I don't have them at my fingertips. I'll leave that to somebody else to bring forward."

Chairman Bunek said, "I'd just like to say that this was on the agenda; this was no surprise. I have stated my opposition to the early childhood right from the beginning. And so, I would say that to say this is a surprise, it's not. And plus, this is just the executive board. So, this is the whole idea is to get it out there now. So, we have a week to think about it, to talk about it, to get input. So, I would say this is not a surprise from my perspective. The other thing is I'm not a "yes person". I'm not going to say yes, just because I'm on the health board and what they're doing, I don't agree with. I've asked them for types of different things that they need to do for COVID and they're not doing them as far as treatments. So, when they're doing something wrong, I'm not going to just say yes, just because the health board wants to do it. And the other thing is, this is a "constitutional republic". And I think that's what Commissioner Rushton was talking about when she said the vote here is voted on by the people. So, we're here when things are wrong, when the people make a wrong decision, we're here to make sure that doesn't go on, and that's the idea of a republic. And that's why programs are began and when they don't work out, it's the idea as representatives of our constituents to vote, to try to do what's right for the county. And that's what I'm trying to do here. So, I would have to disagree completely with what you're saying and to say that I haven't done the research, to me is not true. I mean, I've looked at these things, I've read these studies, I've looked and seen how it's going. And I'm hoping that we don't do more damage to our youth than we do good. And I really fear that we're headed that way."

Commissioner Allgaier said, "So, I need to clarify."

Chairman Bunek replied, "Yes."

Commissioner Allgaier said, "So you just said that if a vote, a public vote is taken and we think it's wrong, it's our job as a constitutional republic to nullify it. You just kind of said that?"

Chairman Bunek replied, "Yes, that's exactly right."

Commissioner Allgaier said, "So, voting doesn't matter anymore?"

Chairman Bunek replied, "I didn't say that."

Commissioner Allgaier said, "Yeah, you did. You just said that this Board has the right to nullify a public vote."

Chairman Bunek replied, "Correct."

Commissioner Allgaier replied, "That's fairly dangerous."

Chairman Bunek said, "Well, go ahead."

Commissioner Allgaier replied, "So, kind of what you're saying, too, is if we decided that the people in your district's voting for you was really wrong, we should hold forums and say what we're going to nullify and what we're not. That's kind of what you're saying."

Chairman Bunek said, "Well, yeah. You could have removed me from office, that can be done. The governor can do that."

Commissioner Allgaier said, "Yes, but it would take another vote of the public?"

Chairman Bunek replied, "No, it would not."

Commissioner Allgaier said, "We couldn't do it here."

Chairman Bunek replied, "Well, I don't know the exact law."

Commissioner Allgaier said, "We couldn't do it here. This is not the forum to reverse a public vote. So, what you're saying is the Board of Commissioners has more power and importance than the vote of our public. This is dangerous."

Chairman Bunek replied, "What is a constitutional republic? Do you understand that?"

Commissioner Allgaier said, "I think we need a legal opinion on that, and you are really going down a strange road here."

Commissioner Wessell said, "And I won't repeat everything else that said, but there is a difference between... I mean, I predicted that you would reduce by 0.001 or something, the early childhood millage. It's quite different, that was on the agenda. What wasn't on the agenda was the elimination of the voter approved early childhood program. And you, as chair, if you want to make that, I think, should have stepped down as chair, as the vice chair and presented that motion. I think the way it was handled in a surprise fashion with you rushing to make the motion. I think that was unhealthy and unfair. That's my point."

Chairman Bunek said, "I did ask her to take it. She said, "You just go right ahead." And I didn't rush it because I let Commissioner Soutas-Little make her motion first."

Commissioner Rushton said, "Let's get a couple things straight first off. I would make a recommendation to Gwenne that she read a little bit more about her job and her job duties and the laws that apply to the position, that's number one. Number two, we are not eliminating early childhood development as my fellow commissioners insist on using that language. We are not eliminating early childhood development. What we as a Board can do, according to law, is reduce. We cannot increase, but yet we have the power to reduce millages. Our chairman in a responsible manner, made the suggestion to reduce the early childhood millage at this time because of the amount of dollars that are sitting unused and going forward, this is a five-year voted in millage. If those situations change, this Board can then increase that millage amount

to serve the needs of the program. So, I'll just talk about eliminating as just pontificating all this rhetoric and all this criticism. They like the narrative and not the solution. So, it's not elimination and it is responsible not to take any more tax dollars from the citizens out there than we need to serve our citizens."

Commissioner Soutas-Little said, "One, to answer a question, and then two, I have a question for Andrew, if he may or may not know the answer. Yes, there are programs in existence at the health department in the past that do reach out to families on different issues. This is what I meant when I said this program, putting it in the health department, allows them to integrate those services with these new services. So, I just wanted to address that. Andrew, do we know... And perhaps I should know, but I don't know, what is the amount that is left in the... Or maybe this is a budget question? So, I'd like to know how much it is, because is there enough to even run the program at the current level, if we can't allow them to increase the staff? I mean, I know we paid back what they advanced from the County. So now they're totally on the millage dollars, but if there's no millage being award in December, then what's left would have to run the program for 2022. And I doubt it's going to be enough to be able to hire additional staff to deal with the increase of requests for services from this program. So that's what I'd like to know before next week of what's in the budget? And then we can ask the health department the impact in terms of what they have in their proposal for 2022 moving forward. Thank you."

Commissioner Wessell said, "In my book, moving down to 0.0000, is eliminating it. I'll just remind this group before we vote on this, and it was a week ago we voted to spend more than this amount of money on positions that we couldn't justify, and hadn't identified a problem with them. So, this Board, you can't have it both ways, you can't be really, really responsible with tax payers' money when it comes to doing whatever your "pet projects" are, but saying no to those projects that our voters have approved. Our voters approved this, they approved it up to this level, 0.0000 is the elimination of a program, it's not the reduction of a program. And it lies in the face of what we proved we were last week when we were careless with our county money. Thank you."

***MOTION AMENDED BY WESSELL TO AMEND TO PROPOSE THAT THE ACTION ON THIS ISSUE BE POSTPONED UNTIL A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE ELIMINATION OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD MILLAGE THAT THE VOTERS VOTED FOR, AND REQUEST AN ATTORNEY OPINION. SECONDED BY ALLGAIER.***

*Discussion – None.*

*ROLL CALL: Wessell – YES; Allgaier – YES; Bunek – NO; Lautner – NO; Robbins – NO; Rushton – NO; Soutas-Little – YES.*

*AYES – 3 NO – 4*

*RECOMMENDATION FAILS.*

***MOTION AMENDED BY BUNEK TO RECOMMEND THAT THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APPROVE THE MILLAGE FOR ROAD, SENIOR AND REDUCE THE EARLY CHILDHOOD MILLAGE TO BE LEVIED AT A RATE OF .000 AMENDED. SECONDED BY RUSHTON.***

*Discussion – None.*

**ROLL CALL: Bunek – YES; Lautner – YES; Robbins – YES; Rushton – YES; Soutas-Little – NO; Wessell – NO; Allgaier – NO.  
AYES – 4 NO – 3**

**RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

Chairman Bunek stated a vote will be taken with the original motion and amendment together.

Commissioner Wessell requested the motion be read.

Chief Deputy Clerk Zywicki read the proposed motion by Commissioner Soutas-Little with the amendment by Chairman Bunek.

Commissioner questions about amendments answered by Janik.

Commissioner Wessell requested the motion in writing before voting.

Clerk Michelle L. Crocker clarified for Commissioners the correct wording of the motion to be to approve the L-4029 with the correct column of 11 instead of column 10 and is to be levied on December 1, 2021.

Commissioner Wessell repeated his request to receive the motion in writing before voting.

Chairman Bunek called for a break taken at 12:38 p.m. and the meeting was called back to order at 12:51 p.m.

Clerk Crocker presented the motion to Commissioners in writing.

Chief Deputy Clerk Zywicki read the motion into the minutes.

**MOTION BY SOUTAS-LITTLE TO RECOMMEND THAT THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APPROVE A MILLAGE RATE THAT DOES NOT EXCEED THE MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE MILLAGE LEVY (INSERTED IN COLUMN 9) AND PLACE THAT MILLAGE RATE IN COLUMN 10 [11] AS THE MILLAGE RATE REQUESTED TO BE LEVIED AS FOLLOWS (MOTION HAS BEEN AMENDED TO REFLECT CHAIRMAN BUNEK'S AMENDMENT WHICH PASSED): ROAD, .4958; SENIOR, .3173; EARLY CHILDHOOD, .000 REQUESTED TO BE LEVIED ON DECEMBER 1, 2021. SECONDED BY WESSELL LAUTNER.**

Discussion – Commissioner Wessell withdraws as the second of the motion, and Commissioner Lautner seconded after Commissioner Wessell withdrew.

**ROLL CALL: Soutas-Little – NO; Wessell – NO; Allgaier – NO; Bunek – YES; Lautner – YES; Robbins – YES; Rushton – YES.  
AYES – 4 NO – 3**

**RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

MOTION BY WESSELL TO RECOMMEND TO THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO FIND A DATE FOR A PUBLIC HEARING AND TIME TO TAKE ACTION BEFORE THE SEPTEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup> DEADLINE. SECONDED BY ALLGAIER.

Discussion - Commissioner Allgaier said, "I think it's fair since this was a vote by the people to let the people comment. And it doesn't look good if we don't let the people comment."

Commissioner Rushton said, "The public comment, historically in regards to this vote, we're all aware that the people voted this; 17% of our citizens voted to have this pass. When it becomes a decision of the board. We can have public comment all day long. However, the Commissioners, the Board of Commissioners have the authority to adjust any one of these taxes. And I think the reasons were stated. They have an abundance of money in their fund, and I have not seen any expansion growths. We're serving, I believe somebody said 77 children or 77 families."

Chairman Bunek stated, "That's 53 families, I think."

Commissioner Rushton continued, "53 families, very small number for \$800,000 budget. So, what this tells me, it's top heavy. The other concern I had was the people that are on fixed incomes that have to pay into a fund that's not even being used at this time. So, I think as I mentioned, it's responsible for us. It's part of our duty, our job requirements to make a decision for the good of all the people and not a few."

Commissioner Wessell said, "Yeah. I don't want to debate a motion we just made because that decision has been made. And so, I'm not going to talk about why I disagree with that, but when you eliminate a program, you ought to have a public hearing to do that. And this Board has a tendency, we make changes in the staffing without talking to people. We make changes in the Health Department program without talking to people. We make changes on this without hearing from parents. I just think it's courteous for our parents to have a public hearing. And I think that that makes sense. And I urge you to support my motion for it."

Commissioner Lautner stated, "I am not going to support the motion for the public hearing, for a couple of reasons. Well, for one reason, but I'm going to get back to you. Keep saying it's eliminating the program, Mr. Wessell. And that is untruthful. We have stated several times. And the reason I supported Will's motion is that there are dollars in there for that program. This in my reasoning is it evens the keel and gives us a better idea of what we will need to go forward. So, I am not supporting your motion because we will have a public hearing on this budget in October. So, we will have a public hearing at that time. If we were going to operate that way, we would have a public hearing every other day on issues that we do as a board of commissioners. So that's my reasons."

Commissioner Allgaier stated, "I don't think that's quite fair. This was a public vote. So, that's not what I was going to say. I keep hearing illusions to all this money they have, and I think a responsible thing would be to find out exactly what they could do with the dollars they have remaining, how this would affect them and programming kind of a gut punch, but let's be specific instead of spouting, "Oh, they have all this money." Let's find out exactly what that means, define it."

Chairman Bunek replied, "Well, we can get it before next week. We can have it so that we know what funds are left in there, early childhood."

Commissioner Allgaier concurred.

Commissioner Soutas-Little stated, "That was my point when Commissioner Lautner says that there's enough money to go forward. Clearly none of us know how much money is in that and it's something we should know. So, we need to know how much money there is, what the impact is on the program. So, I think not only do we find how much money is there, but we need to be in touch with Mrs. Peacock and her staff to find out what the impact is."

Chairman Bunek stated, "Yeah. I mean, I did request the amount a month ago or so, and I think it only went to the end of April, the report that I received. But I believe at that time there was over \$400,000 in there."

Commissioner Soutas-Little asked Chairman Bunek if he knew if the funds had been transferred back to the General Fund?

Chairman Bunek replied that they already had been taken out.

Commissioner Wessell stated, "I don't think before we had this discussion, we've had the conversation with the Health Department. They've hired some people. They're long-term planning for us to arbitrarily. I think we need to out of courtesy for them to talk to them before next, we out of courtesy to our parents and our community. We need to have a public hearing. I don't know why we're averse to that. We have a history of not seeking opinion. But I don't know why we don't, I don't know why we're averse to it. I really don't. So, I maintain that we need a public hearing and we needed a time to make a decision before we eliminate the program at the end of September. And you can say it's not elimination of the program but when you eliminate the funding, it's elimination of a program."

**MOTION BY WESSELL TO RECOMMEND TO THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO FIND A DATE FOR A PUBLIC HEARING AND TIME TO TAKE ACTION BEFORE THE SEPTEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup> DEADLINE. SECONDED BY ALLGAIER.**

Discussion – None.

ROLL CALL: Wessell – YES; Allgaier – YES; Bunek – NO; Lautner – NO; Robbins – NO; Rushton – NO; Soutas-Little – YES.

AYES – 3 NO – 4

**RECOMMENDATION FAILS.**

Commissioner Rushton stated, "I would like the Administrator to have a conversation with our legal, when we have a millage like this that's voted in place. I would like to know if it eliminates the program when we reduce the amount to zero, or does it take the funding away from that department for a specific amount of time? Because I keep hearing this word eliminate, and I think that is incorrect. We're defunding the program for a certain amount of time, because as we have said over and over again, the dollars already under their care limited amount of families. And so could you please."

Janik explained that he is hoping to get a legal opinion, and have it in writing by next week.

Commissioner Rushton said that is perfect and looks forward to seeing the email.

Commissioner Wessell stated, "See, now we've had all our votes, so let me just offer a comment. If we wanted to reduce the millage rate, if we wanted to adjust the budget, why in the world wouldn't we have a study session, either formal or informal with the Health Department to say, 'Here's what we're thinking. What do you need to do the job? What do you need to have done to honor the wish of the voters?' That's my issue with this whole thing, the manner in which it's done, not that we did it, maybe we could have reduced the millage of a few decimal points, but why are we so averse as a board of commissioners to having any information to base our decisions on? That, I think, is a question that ought to bother all of us tonight. Why is it we do not, are not willing to do our homework, are not willing to ask questions, are not willing to know what we're really talking about before we have the discussion. And that is serious."

Chairman Bunek stated, "Yes, I would say, why are we not willing to try to do it as reasonably as possible? Why are we not trying to look for are other avenues? And why do we have to force it into our Health Department when we could have looked at many different people, as I suggested, and this Board refused to do. So, I would say that when you start out as it did, you actually create many problems that you've talked about because it was forced on it in a manner that was very inappropriate. All right. So, I would hope then, we're all set with you then Andrew?"

Giguere confirmed that he was finished.

Parks and Recreation Commission Recommendation – Agreement with Kasson Contracting, Inc. for the Removal of Myles Kimmerly Park Grub Shack:

Janik updated Commissioners that the Myles Kimmerly Park Grub Shack is not structurally safe and instead of dissembling it there is a company that will come in and remove the building.

**MOTION BY LAUTNER TO RECOMMEND TO THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO APPROVE AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN LEELANAU COUNTY AND KASSON CONTRACTING, INC., FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE GRUB SHACK STRUCTURE LOCATED AT MYLES KIMMERLY COUNTY PARK, AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY ROBBINS.**

Discussion – None.

**AYES – 7 (Lautner, Robbins, Rushton, Soutas-Little, Wessell, Allgaier, Bunek)**

**NO – 0**

**RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

Maintenance – Replacement of Parking Lot Security Camera:

Maintenance Director Jerry Culman was present for Commissioner questions.

**MOTION BY RUSHTON TO RECOMMEND THAT THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WAIVE ITS POLICY ON BID REQUIREMENTS AND APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF AN IP-BASED MULTISENSOR SECURITY CAMERA FOR THE GOVERNMENT CENTER CAMPUS, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$6,882.23; FUNDS TO COME FROM #470.000.000.970.010. SECONDED BY ALLGAIER.**

Discussion – None.

**AYES – 7 (Rushton, Soutas-Little, Wessell, Allgaier, Bunek, Lautner, Robbins)**

**NO – 0**

**RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

County Clerk – Board of County Canvassers Appointments:

County Clerk Michelle L. Crocker was present for Commissioner questions.

**MOTION BY LAUTNER TO RECOMMEND TO THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS THAT JUDY TEICHART AND FRED CEPELA BE RE(APPOINTED) FOR THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF CANVASSERS EACH TO A FOUR-YEAR TERM NOVEMBER 1, 2021, THROUGH OCTOBER 31, 2025. SECONDED BY ALLGAIER.**

Discussion – None.

**AYES – 7 (Lautner, Robbins, Rushton, Soutas-Little, Wessell, Allgaier, Bunek)**

**NO – 0**

**RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

County Clerk – Terrance G. Cadieux, Purchase of Prior MERS Service Credit:

County Clerk Michelle L. Crocker was present for Commissioner questions.

**MOTION BY RUSHTON TO RECOMMEND TO THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO APPROVE BY RESOLUTION FOR TERRANCE G. CADIEUX TO PURCHASE FOUR (4) YEARS OF GENERIC SERVICE CREDIT FROM MERS, AS DESCRIBED IN THE APPLICATION FOR ADDITIONAL SERVICE CREDIT PURCHASE, AT A COST OF APPROXIMATELY \$83,228.92, TO BE PAID BY SAID EMPLOYEE. SECONDED BY LAUTNER.**

Discussion – Crocker answered Commissioner questions

**AYES – 7 (Rushton, Soutas-Little, Wessell, Allgaier, Bunek, Lautner, Robbins)**

**NO – 0**

**RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

Administration – 2021 Board Goals Review:

Janik informed Commissioners that Commissioner Robbins requested to review the goals from February 9, 2021. Janik continued that Commissioners may want to start looking for 2022 goals sometime in October and November.

No action taken.

Administration – ARP Update:

Janik informed Commissioners that the proposals and feedback deadline has expired, and he stated there maybe another update in the middle of September sometime. Janik said that he feels the County is ahead of most counties in Michigan in regards to a plan in place.

Review of Financials:

Commissioner Lautner requested further information regarding membership and dues expenses for the America Water Works Association. Commissioner Lautner also requested more information regarding invoices for the amount of condensation problems within the Sheriff's Office evidence room.

Special Reports by Staff, Commissioners, and Affiliated Agencies:

None

Public Comment:

Alma Vasquez, Suttons Bay; Karan Josephus, Bingham Township.



Commissioner Comment:

- Commissioner Wessell stated that several months ago the Board adopted a prayer resolution and it was said that it would help in the way the Board worked together and the civility. He continued that it would make wiser decisions, and he feels that it didn't help today.
- Commissioner Allgaier stated that she is very concerned, and hears Mrs. Josephus that the district she lives in didn't pass the mileage, but citizens vote for things county-wide and now just having township votes won't happen. She continued that the County doesn't have a health department for each township, and while she hears her believes the public vote doesn't matter.
- Commissioner Rushton thanked Josephus and stated that she made a very important point as commissioners, "We are elected". Rushton continued that Ms. Josephus stated that both her districts didn't support the early childhood, and is to represent the citizens for her. Rushton said she makes the decision for those people she serves. She stated that when the Board talk about operations that are mundane then Commissioners all look to see how to best serve the citizens, and what the goal should be.
- Chairman Bunek stated that he has voted with the three Democrats several times, against the three Republicans to pass things that needed to be passed. He said that he would ask Commissioner Wessell how many times has he voted with three Republicans to go against what the other two Democrats want. He continued that he tries to be as fair as he can, tries to do his research and study, tries makes the decision that is best for the people of Leelanau County, and that's why he believes he has been voted into office, and will continue to try to do.
- Commissioner Soutas-Little thanked Chairman Bunek for his point and said that the Board is not Republicans and Democrats, "We are Commissioners" and we represent all of the County. She said that within her six years she has been operating from that, and she is the first "Democrat" elected from a Republican district. Soutas-Little stated that she feels the reason she was elected is because she does not go by politics, and goes by what the people of the community want, what's important, what benefits and what doesn't. She continued that since January of this year things have changed, and she is really sad to see that, because it is like there are parties instead of commissioners. She said it is very disappointing, and hard for someone like her, who has always approached it from a different stand point. She stated that is has become very stressful for the meetings, because the Board is not talking as a group any more, instead are talking past each other, decisions are made, and it is though everyone's minds are made up based on politics, as opposed to be based on community issues and what's best for community. She continued that it is true that the farming community didn't support early childhood, like Bingham, Solon and many others. She said that it is also true that in certain centers of the population there was over 50% of those people that voted in many of the townships, and she thinks it's because it reflects a different population. She continued that Leelanau has an older population in this community and Commissioners often times forget what the younger folks need, and she said she is hopeful that next week the Board will remember what some of the younger people need in terms of support. Soutas-Little stated that she appreciates the comments that were made by Alma (referenced in the audience) today, because she brings a point that Commissioners are helping everybody, and there is a reason the program is universal and is not limited to one segment so that all parties interact socially together for development.

- Commissioner Robbins stated the he wants to go back to his first day on January 5, 2021, where he stuck his neck out, (looking at Commissioner Soutas-Little) "You wouldn't be on the Health Board if I hadn't voted." He said that he does go back and forth, but he doesn't see much from "your" side helping him out when he wants something. He continued that "you" should remember that, and he is here to work on both sides, but since he has been here nine months it is either one way or the other, and there is no in between from (motions to his right) "you" three.
- Commissioner Soutas-Little requested to speak again. She thanked Commissioner Robbins for the vote to place her on the Health Board, otherwise it would have been the four (4) to three (3) that has been happening. She continued that before that she has voted with Commissioner Lautner, with Commissioner Rushton, and Chairman Bunek and has been the swing vote because it's the right thing to do. She said that she did not for the two new departments, and maybe it was because "you" (Commissioner Robbins) and she didn't feel it was presented right. Soutas-Little stated that she told Commissioner Robbins right off the bat what she was looking for, and that's the only thing that has come up from Commissioner Robbins that she hasn't supported.

Approval of Financials —  
Amendments & Transfers:

Miscellaneous Fund Transfers and Amendments:  
None.

Claims and Accounts:

**MOTION BY LAUTNER TO RECOMMEND TO THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APPROVAL OF CLAIMS AND ACCOUNTS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$101,198.81. SECONDED BY RUSHTON.**

Discussion – None.

**AYES – 7 (Lautner, Robbins, Rushton, Soutas-Little, Wessell, Allgaier, Bunek)**  
**NO – 0** **RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

Post Audit Claims and Accounts:

**MOTION BY LAUTNER TO RECOMMEND TO THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APPROVAL OF POST AUDIT CLAIMS AND ACCOUNTS IN THE AMOUNT \$5,387,359.87. SECONDED BY RUSHTON.**

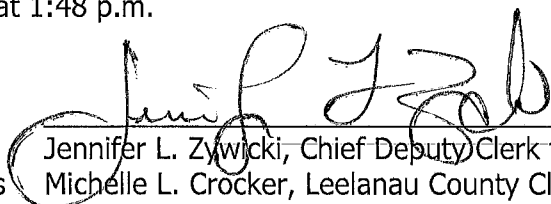
Discussion – None.

**AYES – 7 (Lautner, Robbins, Rushton, Soutas-Little, Wessell, Allgaier, Bunek)**  
**NO – 0** **RECOMMENDATION PASSES.**

Adjournment:

Chairman Bunek adjourned the meeting at 1:48 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
William J. Bunek, Chairman  
Leelanau County Board of Commissioners

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer L. Zywicki, Chief Deputy Clerk for  
Michelle L. Crocker, Leelanau County Clerk