

The following was paraphrased/read at First Public Comment Period at above meeting.--spm

SUBJECT: Commissioners apparent arbitrary & reckless decision to REMOVE Finance and Human Resources duties/responsibilities from the County Clerk on May 11, 2021

We addressed Commissioners 9/29, 9/30, many other meetings and again today...

More reasons that Commissioners, Administrator, other Elected officials must publicly apologize to the County Clerk and Taxpayers as requested per our presentations on the Public Record at 3 recent Board meetings.

An (A feeble) attempt by the Board to undo **the damage** of deciding at an earlier date one time **salary increases** to all employees - union/non-union. Then on 9/2/22 a knee-jerk attempt to "help(?)" taxpayers by **nominally reducing taxes (Knowing all along it could NOT be done!)**. These appear to be buying loyalty to Commissioners... These appear NOT to be authorized gifts from taxpayers...

Commissioners' **admission of the lack 'due diligence'** in **both matters** is astounding! Obviously there's too much of our **overtaxed** extra money to give away to employees enjoying solid employment with bennies second to none but nada/zero for taxpayer relief. Hardly the appearance of the proper exercise of Commissioners' required **fiduciary duty**.

Commissioners expect residents/taxpayers to honestly believe that commissioners' panicked, knee-jerk--no due diligence--efforts to establish a "new" finance dept. with three new employees with no county finance experience costing more than \$300,000 per year will perform finance duties equal to or superior to the Clerks many years of outstanding performance!?

The Board's action **May 11, 2021** to remove **Finance & Human Resources duties/functions from the Clerk--Clerk-loathing exercise--revealing** the apparent **lack of due diligence & performance of fiduciary duty, signaled** the Boards new Modus Operandi. Will this "new" **modus operandi** be required to be part of the contract with the new administrator and will **it** be permanently implemented/etched in all the Board's future decisions/actions and part the Board Rules? spm

-----Below is an admonition for those in public service-----

All **politeness** is owing to Liberty. We polish one another, and rub off our Corners and rough Sides by a sort of amicable Collision. **To restrain this, is inevitably to bring a Rust upon Men's Understanding.** 'Tis a **destroying** of Civility, Good Breeding, and even **Charity** itself.

— Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury

SUBJECT: Commissioners apparent arbitrary & reckless decision to REMOVE Finance and Human Resources duties/responsibilities from the County Clerk on May 11, 2021

*(The following was hurriedly prepared by us as Administrator Janik made his report/presentation re Agenda Item 7(a) about his proposed **plans** to help commissioners out of their foolish/tragic **clerk-loathing(1)** decision. His admission that the Director of Finance and 2 employees may be unable to function properly and must be trained, escapes our comprehension! And, his plan to **return oversight of accounting to the Clerk from now until March 2023** reveals and admits the apparent gruesomeness of the Commissioners folly! *****See Leelanau Enterprise Article by Eric Carlson Oct. 13, 2022 Section 1, page 1 & 14, "Duties may temporarily return to clerk" --spm)*

*****The following was paraphrased/read at 2nd Public Comment Period at above meeting.** -spm

We appreciate the administrators efforts to help commissioners correct their serious **mistake**. His report plan appears to **admit** Commissioners' mistake and its costly consequences. The apparent purpose of the Board's bad decision was *to establish a **clerk-loathing** attitude*. **It's** caused an unbelievable, deliberate, unprecedented, self-inflicted, unnecessary morale-sapping crisis that will take many years to repair and may impact the new administrator's performance.

The best way to proceed is for Commissioners and Administrator to immediately apologize to the Clerk and Taxpayer/Residents for causing such an enormous amount harm to people and waste of resources. This will properly set the stage for the new administrator.

It appears Commissioners (first 4 Republicans and soon 3 Democrats) convinced themselves that bad politics trumps fiduciary duty and dedication to honest Public Service. The commissioner's **clerk-loathing** attack decision appeared to have the Administrators **acquiescence(2)**; it will forever be on the Public Record!

We support all efforts to correct this bad decision as soon as possible. Sadly and unfortunately it will take many years to recover and fix, and **\$100,000's of thousands of unnecessary taxpayer dollars**. The **loathing harm** to the Clerk and **severe damage to Commissioners character & Integrity** cannot be easily fixed...only partially healed by time... spm

Oxford Languages website:

(1) Loathing: A feeling of intense dislike or disgust; hatred.

(2) Acquiescence: The reluctant acceptance of something without protest.

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Duties may temporarily return to clerk

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Responsibility for managing the county's finances may be returned to the office of the County Clerk temporarily after next week as officials attempt to unravel a series of accounting and payroll errors made by the county's new Finance Department and train depart-

ment personnel on how to do their jobs. Establishment of the new department and a new Human Resources office this year has resulted in "the most controversy I've dealt with in my 10 years here," said county administrator Chet Janik, who plans to retire as the county's top appointed official at the end of this year.

More controversy may be in evidence, however, when Janik unveils a "transition plan" at a budget workshop meeting of the Leelanau County Board of Commissioners next Wednesday morning, Oct. 19.

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plan at the county board's annual meeting this week, and commissioners agreed to re-post the Oct. 19 workshop session as a "special meeting" at which they would be empowered to make decisions.

Janik initially outlined his plan at a meeting of the board's Finance and Audit Committee last Thursday afternoon, Oct. 6. The plan is expected to call on County Clerk Michelle Crocker, her Chief Deputy Clerk Jennifer Zywicki and Deputy Clerk Cathy Hartesvelt to oversee the Finance Department until at least March 1, 2023.

During that period, the Clerk's office would not only supervise and train the new Finance Director, Jared Prince, but also the two newly-hired "account clerks" now working in the department. Before next week's county board workshop meeting, Janik said, he and

others will finalize a plan containing detailed "benchmarks and standards" for how the new Finance Department should be trained and how it should operate going forward.

"It was said to us that we never had a plan," said District No. 7 Commissioner Melinda Lauther, who chairs the Finance and Audit Committee, "so I'm excited that we're talking about a plan."

In fact, the "plan" to strip Crocker and the clerk's office of its financial and human resources management responsibilities and create two new county government departments has been the subject of county board discussion since May 2021. That's when District No. 1 Commissioner Rick Robbins, who had been in office for all of three months at the time, proposed the sweeping reorganization of the county government. Robbins now serves as a member of the Finance and Audit Committee.

Robbins introduced his reorganization proposal as a "late addition" to the agenda of the May 2021 executive meeting of the board when Crocker was out-of-state on vacation. Like Crocker, Janik had no advance knowledge of Robbins' proposal. Nonetheless, with virtually no discussion, a 4-3 Republican majority of the board instantly voted in favor of the reorganization.

Since May 2021, the process of writing new position descriptions and hiring new personnel to staff the new Finance Department and Human Resources office has been fraught with difficulty.

At the beginning of this year, Chief Deputy Clerk Zywicki, who had been primarily responsible for financial management, was hired to head the new Finance Department at a \$62,736 per year salary. Zywicki stepped down in April, however, after it became clear that the new position

would involve more work than she said she was led to believe, including responsibility for supervising two employees. Notably, Zywicki's salary was identical to that of a newly-hired Human Resources Director who had no supervisory responsibilities and no experience in Human Resources (HR) Management.

In addition, county board members had been in agreement that having a fulltime human resources manager was not necessary — but finding an HR consultant or a part-time HR manager proved to be difficult. In April, former Chief Deputy County Treasurer Darcy Weaver was hired as the county's new fulltime HR manager. When Zywicki stepped down as head of the new Finance Department, Weaver was also appointed to head the Finance Department on an interim basis.

Two longtime county employees with experience in county

finances had been hired to serve as "account clerks" in the new Finance Department. But they abruptly quit those posts amid the turmoil to fill new vacancies in the Treasurer's office. Janik subsequently hired two new employees to replace them who had no county government experience.

In July, Janik hired Jared Prince of Gaylord to be the county's new Finance Director. Prince was hired in at the top of a new pay scale for the position — a \$74,821 annual salary. Prince had been working at a Gaylord auditing firm, mostly on tribal government accounts. He came with no prior county government experience.

Asked by commissioners at a July county board meeting whether the new Finance Director he had just hired is a certified public accountant (CPA), Janik said he wasn't certain but would check. Prince is not a CPA.