

**KENT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

*Thursday, May 10, 2007*

*Administration Building - Room 310*

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Meeting called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chair Roger C. Morgan.

Present: Commissioners Agee, Boelema, Bulkowski, Dillon, Hennessy, Hiddema, Klein, Mast, Mayhue, Morren, Parrish, Rolls, Tanis, Vander Molen, Vaughn, Vonk, Voorhees, Wahlfield, Chair Morgan - 19.

Absent: None.

Invocation: Commissioner Vaughn introduced Pastor Alton Hardy, Madison Square Christian Reformed Church, who gave the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Scott Atchison, 2251 South Saulk Trail, Grand Rapids - Expressed his desire again to have an informational booth in the City of Grand Rapids. He is requesting a copy of the database of those who by law will receive notice should House Bill 4261 (amending the Convention and Tourism Promotion Act, under which an existing nonprofit convention and tourism bureau could levy a 2% assessment on hotel and motel rooms to support marketing and promotion programs) pass.

SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

John Ball Zoological Garden Veterinarian Recognition – Dr. Richard Bennett

Chair Morgan introduced Dr. Bennett, DVM, who has provided veterinarian services to the John Ball Park Zoo for the past 25 years. He read a proclamation declaring May 10, 2007, as Dr. Richard Bennett day in Kent County.

Dr. Bennett thanked Commissioners and Zoo staff for allowing him the opportunity to work with the animals, and be a part of the zoo for the past 25 years.

CONSENT AGENDA

- a) Approval of the Minutes of April 26, 2007 Meeting
- b) May 1, 2007 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes  
(Reports of Claims and Allowances)
- c) Resolutions:

5-10-07-49 – APPROVAL OF SPECIAL ASSESSMENT ROLL – PINE LAKE / DRAIN COMMISSION

WHEREAS, the Inland Lake Level Act of 1961 mandates that all dams and outlet

structures within the County's jurisdiction be regularly inspected and maintained. In the case of

Pine Lake, this included cleaning and removing obstructions from a storm sewer which allows high water to flow from the lake; and

WHEREAS, the Drain Commissioner has incurred a cost of \$2,700 for this activity; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Inland Lake Level Act of 1961, the cost shall be levied against the properties in the established special assessment district; and

WHEREAS, the Drain Commissioner held a public hearing on the assessment roll on April 19, 2007. Hearing all objections and public input regarding changes to the roll, the Drain Commissioner has approved and confirmed the roll.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that in accordance with MCL §324.20714(3) the County Board of Commissioners approves the cost of the project and the special assessment roll, and authorizes the Drain Commissioner to levy the cost to the properties in the established special assessment district.

#### 5-10-07-50 – PERSONAL SERVICES CONTRACT – DAVID JAGER / EQUALIZATION

WHEREAS, David Jager has served as the Director of the Kent County Bureau of Equalization for 19 years; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Jager has submitted his letter of retirement, effective June 22, 2007; and

WHEREAS, the size and complexity of the County's equalization and apportionment, requires a Level IV assessor's certification from the State Assessors Board for the Equalization Director and Mr. Jager holds this certification; and

WHEREAS, Deputy Director of Equalization Matt Woolford is in the process of acquiring the Level IV certification; and

WHEREAS, County Administrator/Controller Delabbio has presented a transition plan for the Bureau of Equalization, which includes a recommendation that Mr. Jager be retained on a contractual basis to provide various services to the County/Bureau of Equalization for a 12-to-18 month time period, effective July 1, 2007; and

WHEREAS, the Kent County Employees Retirement System provides that retired County employees may be rehired or contracted with, subject to certain limitations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Kent County Board of Commissioners hereby approves a personal services contract with David Jager to perform certain duties associated with the Bureau of Equalization, beginning July 1, 2007, and ending June 30, 2008, and may be extended by six months (to December 31, 2008); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Kent County Board of Commissioners authorizes the County Administrator/Controller to execute said agreement.

(Commissioner Vonk requested that resolution 5-10-07-49 be removed from the Consent Agenda.)

Motion by Commissioner Vaughn, seconded by Commissioner Klein, to approve the remaining consent agenda items.

Motion carried:

Yeas: Klein, Dillon, Vaughn, Mayhue, Bulkowski, Hennessy, Vander Molen, Mast, Agee,  
Morren, Voorhees, Boelema, Hiddema, Tanis, Parrish, Rolls, Wahlfield, Vonk, Chair  
Morgan – 19.  
Nays: 0.

5-10-07-49 – APPROVAL OF SPECIAL ASSESSMENT ROLL – PINE LAKE / DRAIN COMMISSION

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Motion by Commissioner Vaughn, seconded by Commissioner Tanis, that the resolution be adopted.

Motion carried:

Yeas: Klein, Dillon, Vaughn, Mayhue, Bulkowski, Hennessy, Vander Molen, Mast, Agee,  
Morren, Voorhees, Boelema, Hiddema, Tanis, Parrish, Rolls, Wahlfield, Chair  
Morgan – 18.

Nays: 0.

Abstain: Vonk – 1.

RESOLUTIONS

5-10-07-51 – NEW FISCAL POLICY – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTICIPATION  
/

FISCAL SERVICES

WHEREAS, Kent County has determined that it is in the public interest to participate in economic development initiatives intended to stimulate growth of the local economy; and

WHEREAS, the State has provided City/Township governments with several tax capture/exemption programs which allow such governments to direct County property tax levy to economic development initiatives, with the concurrence with the County; and

WHEREAS, the County has determined that participation in City/Township tax capture/tax exemption programs should adhere to certain guidelines concerning term, tax subject

to capture/exemption, maximum level of County participation and determination of long term financial benefit to accrue to Kent County government.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners approve a new Fiscal Policy governing participation in Economic Development Financing Initiatives.

Motion by Commissioner Mast, seconded by Commissioner Klein, that the resolution be adopted.

After discussion, motion by Commissioner Tanis, seconded by Commissioner Morren, to call the question.

Motion carried by voice vote.

Motion to adopt resolution carried:

Yeas: Klein, Vaughn, Bulkowski, Vander Molen, Mast, Agee, Morren, Voorhees, Boelema,

Hiddema, Tanis, Parrish, Rolls, Wahlfield, Vonk, Chair Morgan – 16.

Nays: Dillon, Mayhue, Hennessy - 3.

5-10-07-52 – ADDITION OF A VETERINARIAN POSITION / JOHN BALL ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN AND PARK

WHEREAS, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations require a comprehensive veterinary plan for the public display of common, threatened and endangered animal collections at the John Ball Zoological Garden (JBZ). The JBZ has met this requirement by contracting for veterinary services on a part-time basis; and

WHEREAS, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) grants accreditation to the JBZ to exhibit endangered and threatened species and to participate in Species Survival Plans and other AZA conservation programs; and

WHEREAS, AZA conducted a regularly scheduled accreditation study of the JBZ in early 2006. Based on the size and diversity of the animal collection, the AZA highly recommended that the JBZ employ a full-time staff veterinarian to provide medical care for the collection; and

WHEREAS, the AZA indicated that continuing accreditation may be at risk if access to veterinary care was not enhanced in the future. The JBZ is the only accredited zoo in Michigan that does not have a full-time veterinarian on staff; and

WHEREAS, the current veterinary services contract will expire in the near future. Dr. Richard Bennett, who has provided exceptional care for the animal collection for nearly twenty five years, has informed JBZ that he will not be available to continue in that role indefinitely. Given the recommendation of the AZA and the loss of Dr. Bennett's services, it is the appropriate time to hire a full-time staff veterinarian. Human Resources has documented the position classification "Veterinarian" in MPP grade 25, based on market information available from AZA and Bureau of Labor Statistics surveys and the Management Pay Plan classification system; and

WHEREAS, the annual salary and benefit costs will be \$97,112; the net addition to FY 2007 salary and benefit costs will be \$56,648.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners create the job classification "Veterinarian" (MPP 25) and approves the addition of one full-time Veterinarian position to provide on-site medical care for the John Ball Zoological Garden animal collection; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board of Commissioners appropriates \$56,648 from the Unreserved/Undesignated General Fund Balance to the 2007 John Ball Zoo budget.

Motion by Commissioner Mast, seconded by Commissioner Vander Molen, that the resolution be adopted.

Motion carried:

Yeas: Klein, Dillon, Vaughn, Mayhue, Bulkowski, Hennessy, Vander Molen, Mast, Agee,

Morren, Voorhees, Boelema, Hiddema, Tanis, Parrish, Rolls, Wahlfield, Vonk, Chair Morgan – 19.

Nays: 0.

#### 5-10-07-53 – LOWELL REGIONAL PARK – YEITER ACQUISITION / PARKS

WHEREAS, since 1998 the County has been acquiring land to create a regional park in Lowell Township. To date, the County has secured 384 acres, and holds a right of first refusal on another 180 acres; and

WHEREAS, adjacent property currently owned by Donald Yeiter Trust and Betty Yeiter has recently become available for purchase. The property provides critical frontage on Alden Nash Road and Cascade Roads, and has rolling topography and wetlands particularly suitable for park development; and

WHEREAS, the property meets the criteria of the Parks Department's Recreation and Natural Areas Plan; and

WHEREAS, the property has been appraised for \$615,000. The seller has agreed to donate a portion of the purchase price, lowering the cost to the County to \$382,500 (\$232,500 for Parcel A and \$150,000 for Parcel B). The seller will retain a life lease on four acres of property which includes the residence; and

WHEREAS, funds for the purchase are available in the Parks Acquisition and Development Fund.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners hereby approves the purchase of property from the Donald Yeiter Trust and Betty Yeiter (PPNs 41-20-22-100-045 and 41-20-22-300-010) at a cost of \$382,500 plus closing costs.

Motion by Commissioner Wahlfield, seconded by Commissioner Morren, that the resolution be adopted.

Motion carried:

Yeas: Klein, Dillon, Vaughn, Mayhue, Bulkowski, Hennessy, Vander Molen, Mast, Agee,

Morren, Voorhees, Boelema, Tanis, Parrish, Rolls, Wahlfield, Vonk, Chair Morgan - 18.

Nays: Hiddema - 1.

05-10-07-54 - RESOLUTION TO STATE LEGISLATORS ON STATE BUDGET /  
BOARD

OF COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, after seven straight years of state budget deficits and four years of budget cuts, we are facing yet another \$3 billion shortfall in state revenue for the current and 2007-08 fiscal years; and

WHEREAS, \$3.6 billion has already been cut from the state's budget over the past four years, and the state is operating with fewer state employees than we had in 1970; and

WHEREAS, we have cut major taxes over 32 times in the past decade, our unemployment rate remains one of the highest in the country, and our auto industry continues to struggle; and

WHEREAS, the Single Business Tax (SBT), the primary tax paid by businesses in Michigan, will be entirely phased out by the end of the year with no replacement for the \$1.2 billion in revenue generated from this tax; and

WHEREAS, funding for local governments has been cut by \$2 billion over the last 5 years, resulting in a loss of over 1,600 police officers and hundreds of fire fighters which compromises the safety of our local communities; and

WHEREAS, further cuts to state safety net programs for food assistance, childcare and health care will only result in a shift of demand to already overburdened county and municipal programs; and

WHEREAS, the County of Kent cannot sustain further cuts in essential state services and that further funding cuts will result in a loss of quality of life for the citizens of this state and county and an inability to attract new business to our communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Michigan Legislature must demonstrate bipartisan leadership by: identifying a replacement for the SBT that is paid by business and not individuals; putting forward their ideas for restructuring our tax system in order to generate sufficient revenue to meet the needs of the 21st Century; and affirming their commitment to find funding solutions that move Michigan into a sound economic future; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Kent County Board of Commissioners expects the State Legislature to restore revenue sharing to all counties as committed to, when the respective county's revenue sharing reserves expire; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Kent County Board of Commissioners work with the County's Lobbyist, Public Affairs Associates, to make Kent County's position known to the State legislature.

Motion by Commissioner Parrish, seconded by Commissioner Dillon, that the resolution be adopted

Motion carried by voice vote.

REPORTS

There were no reports.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Department of Human Services

Commissioner Vaughn announced that the property closing for the new Department of Human Services building occurred on May 9th.

### City of Wyoming

Commissioner Boelema said that the City of Wyoming leadership has formed a task force to study gang violence and youth crime.

### Downtown Development Authority

Commissioner Mayhue asked if the County was still planning on meeting with the Downtown Development Authority?

Administrator Delabbio - yes.

### West Michigan Sports Awards

Commissioner Rolls announced that the West Michigan Sports Awards annual banquet will be held on Monday, May 14, 2007, with special guest Tony Dungy, Coach of Indianapolis Colts. Proceeds will benefit Mentor West Michigan.

### Liquor Tax Bill

Commissioner Tanis mentioned the email Commissioners received from MAC with regard to the proposed liquor tax bill and the effects its passage would have on Network 180.

Daryl Delabbio said that that County collects approximately \$3 million on liquor taxes of which Network 180 receives about half. Passage of the bill would reduce Kent's general fund revenue and would have significant impact on Network 180 programs.

Commissioner Tanis urged Commissioners to contact their state legislators to urge the bill's defeat. Otherwise, some of the people helped by Network 180 will end up in our institutions.

Commissioner Boelema is also concerned about the potential cutting of funds to Network 180. Without any question, bill passage would affect the poor of our community.

Commissioner Klein also echoed the concerns on the cutting of funds to Network 180. The programs are for people who don't qualify for Medicaid/Medicare and who cannot get services any other way.

### Health Department Fees

Commissioner Mast asked what the status was on the County looking into the Health Department restaurant fees.

Administrator Daryl Delabbio commented that there is work being done and a recommendation

will be coming to a future Finance Committee meeting.

Pension Board Conference

Commissioner Dillon believes that Pension Board members should not go to the Hawaiian conference on taxpayer funds. This sends a bad message even though the Board of Commission does not have control over it.

South Kent Landfill

Commissioner Voorhees said that there would be no sludge coming from the Kalamazoo River to the South Kent Landfill.

State Budget Crisis

Chair Morgan informed Commissioners that he has a letter for them to sign to send to Lansing legislators along with resolution 5-10-07-54 regarding resolving the state's budget crisis.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:40 a.m., Commissioner Vaughn moved to adjourn, subject to the call of the Chair, and to Thursday, May 24, 2007, Room 310, County Administration Building, at 8:30 a.m., for an Official Meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Klein. Motion carried.

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Roger C. Morgan, Chair

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Mary Hollinrake, County Clerk