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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Kent County Board of Commissioners Looks Back, Ahead**

**KENT COUNTY** - The Kent County Board of Commissioners accomplished a great deal during the last year. Board Chair Jim Saalfeld and County Administrator/Controller Daryl Delabbio recently took time to reflect on the major tasks achieved by the Board and County Staff during 2016. These include:

1. *Dispatch*: Approved an agreement with the City of Wyoming to contract for police and fire dispatch services, which started on July 1. The Board also approved a ballot question requesting a 70 cent per month increase in the dispatch surcharge (overwhelmingly approved by the voters in November).
2. *Museum/Zoo Millage*: The Grand Rapids Public Museum and the John Ball Zoo requested that the County place a 0.44 mill property tax increase on the November 2016 ballot. The Board approved placing the question on the ballot and the voters overwhelming approved it.
3. *Implementation of the Space Needs Study*: In response to Study findings, work on the Juvenile Detention facility, Correctional Facility (kitchen and intake), and new Circuit Court courtrooms is in process.
4. *Lakeshore Regional Partnership*: The County has been monitoring this process.
5. *Collective Bargaining*: Successfully negotiated the Corrections Officers and Court employee contracts in a timely manner.
6. *2017 Budget*: Submitted, approved, and structurally balanced.
7. *Land Bank*: The Land Bank Authority Subcommittee has been meeting and expects to have a report and recommendations to the Board of Commissioners by the end of the first quarter of 2017.
8. *Credit Rating*: The County's Triple-A credit rating and highest short-term credit ratings were affirmed by Moody's and Standard & Poor's for the 18<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.
9. *Airport*: The transition from a County department to an Airport Authority was officially approved by the Federal Aviation Administration on July 1.
10. *Agri-Business Work Group*: Completed its work and submitted a report and recommendations to the Board of Commissioners.
11. *Switch*: Created the first Renaissance Zone in the County to enable the Switch development to take place in Gaines Charter Township.
12. *Management Pay Plan Review*: A MPP Review Subcommittee was formed which presented its final report and recommendations. Implementation of recommendations were completed by year end.
13. *Lead Task Force*: A community-wide Lead Task Force was created and has been reappointed to complete its work.

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14. *FOC Engagement Task Force*: A Friend of the Court Engagement Task Force was created near the end of the year and was reappointed to continue its work into 2017.

Members can expect to tackle the additional issues outlined below in 2017:

- 1) *Appointment of an Administrator/Controller*: Daryl Delabbio will be retiring on July 1. This will be the first time since 1998 that the Board of Commissioners will be faced with the selection of a County Administrator/Controller. Chair Saalfeld has appointed a Subcommittee to determine the process to recruit and recommend the appointment of a new County Administrator/Controller.
- 2) *Continued Space Needs Study Implementation*: This will be an ongoing process and series of projects to ensure that (i) the County's facilities are being maintained, and (ii) the most efficient and effective means are being used to enable our employees to deliver quality services to our community. We will be issuing an RFP for 82 Ionia and planning for the impact this potential sale would have on our facilities.
- 3) *Collective Bargaining*: Four Collective Bargaining agreements will be expiring at the end of 2017.
- 4) *CAA/CDBG*: A work session has been scheduled in February to discuss the potential merger of the Area Community Service and Employment Training (ACSET) Community Action Agency with the County's Department of Community Development and Housing.
- 5) *Standing Rules*: Each odd-numbered year, the Board of Commissioners' Standing Rules are reviewed and updated. Vice-Chair Mandy Bolter will be establishing a Subcommittee of the Legislative & Human Resources Committee to review the Rules and make recommendations for Board consideration. The Board must approve changes to the Rules by its second meeting in April.
- 6) *2018 Budget*: The 2018 Budget will be a challenging one, including:
  - a. continued monitoring of State shared revenues and impact on the County's revenue stream;
  - b. slow growth in the County's State taxable value due to very modest increases in the Consumer Price Index (CPI); and
  - c. balancing operational and capital needs.

"While there will certainly be other issues that we face during the course of a year, as you can see, it is already shaping up to be a very busy 2017," said Board Chair James Saalfeld. "This Board remains committed to providing effective services to our residents while operating transparently and with a balanced budget. We look forward to great results in 2017."

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