

**Leelanau County Board of Commissioners**  
**Work Session – Tuesday, March 21, 2023**  
Approved 6/20/2023

*Proceedings of the meeting are being recorded (audio and video). The video of the meeting can be found at the following link: <https://www.leelanau.gov/meetingdetails.asp?MAId=2498#video>*

Meeting called to order by Chairman Ty Wessell at 4:30 p.m. Today's meeting is being held at the Government Center, 8527 E. Government Center Drive, Suttons Bay, Michigan.

Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence:

Chairman Wessell stated that the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and a moment of silence will be set aside until the Regular Session today at 7:00 p.m.

<u>Roll Call:</u>	District #1	Jamie Kramer	PRESENT
	#2	James O'Rourke	PRESENT
	#3	Doug Rexroat	PRESENT
	#4	Ty Wessell	PRESENT
	#5	Kama Ross	PRESENT
	#6	Gwenne Allgaier	PRESENT
	#7	Melinda C. Lautner	PRESENT

Public Comment:

The following individual(s) spoke in person: Lois Bahle.

Purpose of the Meeting – Discussion:

Review of Summary of Services/Potential Board Goals:

Administrator Deborah Allen said she will make every effort to finish up before 5:45 p.m. at which time there will be a small break so the next work session can begin at 6:00 p.m.

Administrator Allen stated that last month she presented a summary to the Board of Commissioners of the different services in the county and the intent was to give an overview of each Department. She did ask for a two-page document and 117 pages later, she apologizes; however, the information is incredibly valuable and it gave her great insight and where there could be some upcoming challenges.

There are three components she would like to discuss: People/Positions; Facilities/Property; and Programs/Partnerships. Documents can be found at the following link:

[https://www.leelanau.gov/downloads/summary\\_of\\_services\\_03212023\\_opt.pdf](https://www.leelanau.gov/downloads/summary_of_services_03212023_opt.pdf)

Administrator Allen talked about the appropriate structure currently with a Deputy Assistant and the other individuals. The other thing is that there are several Department Heads with 20+ years of service and she would like to start a transition plan and share their knowledge so we are not in a situation, like if Planning and Community Director Trudy Galla left, looking at the scope and depth, etc., of what she does, how that position would be filled as it is a system within itself. How do we start the process and be responsible for County Government. The Maintenance Director has been here for over 30 years. There were three maintenance people in Leland and we have the Government Center and Law Enforcement Center, the Dam, the

Towers, the Waste Water Treatment, etc. and that is a lot to manage with the same skill set that came from Leland. This is the reason that we need to go into contracts, for example with D & W Mechanical. As we go into phase 2 and phase 3, of future plans and the potential build out of the basement, which will stress the infrastructure. Many Commissioners have heard the discussion regarding a Facilities Manager and the need for that position or an agreement. Allen continued that another smoking gun is with the Information Technology Technician and that she is not a Director. She continued that when you look at the reports from the Departments, they are looking to get new operating systems and we only have one person in that Department and we utilize SafetyNet for cyber security. Allen attended a meeting today that shows some gaps, and then there is an audit by the FBI and the State Police where they are looking at who has access, how they integrate and where the liabilities are. MMRMA has a new division to help locate some gaps and are in the process of a quote. She has asked IT Technician Liana Wilson to look into and how to prepare the organization. The last thing anyone wants is a leak and we need a good lockdown system.

Administrator Allen would like to hold off a wage study with Human Resources Director and wait to make sure that the right positions are in place going forward before there are pay increases. She believes that there is dire concern in the area of 9-1-1 Dispatch, as it is hard to fill the positions. The Department Head is filling in and it needs to be looked at.

Administrator Allen referenced the Policy and Procedures manual and there are multiple union contracts that have to be dealt with.

Administrator Allen continued regarding the Capital Improvement Document that comes to the Board and it does not include the potential build out of the lower level and she does not have potential costs for that, as the bids are still out. That is another additional expense. There is also the Youth Detention Facility which is a \$50 million request to the State, and that does not include staff or operations, that is just the buildout.

Commissioner Allgaier stated that she believes the cost share to the County could be \$70,000 per year, based on usage.

Administrator Allen commented on a potential feasibility study with the company that did the center in Genesee County and to cost share on that expense. Discussions with Antrim Family Court and what their engagement in this may be and what the true costs will be, are still unknown. How to budget for that will need to be taken into consideration.

Commissioner Allgaier said that if there is no State money, it will not happen. There may have to be some spent, but it is not \$100K. Discussion ensued on the Youth Detention facility.

Commissioner Kramer commented on the feasibility study and offered comments that it will really give incites as to where to go.

Administrator Allen responded that she has not been involved with the feasibility study. She does think that there will be a better understanding and it is fair to say that Grand Traverse County will take the lead as it will be located in that County. She continued that they have said that they are not prepared at this time to take it on as they are doing a feasibility study for

other things. It could be two – three years; however, if the State gave the money now, the leadership could change.

Commissioner Allgaier said we need to remember that this will not be a County facility, it will be Court facility.

Administrator Allen does not understand the difference in distinction.

Chairman Wessell commented on the need for services; however, the less we get involved in the nitty, gritty, it is a State issue. They may say this a County or Court issue. He hears that it is a State responsibility and wants us to exercise caution. Other Commissioners offered agreement.

Commissioner Kramer would like to see some holding off, until we have all the information.

Administrator Allen commented that she is just placing this on the radar for discussion. There are safety and security issues for this Building and how to proceed. Other Counties have gone to more secure systems and what does it mean to Leelanau County? MMRMA will be doing a Security Assessment of everything from cameras to panic buttons, what is new technology or what is best practices. MMRMA does have RAP grants that could potentially support some of the initiatives; however, they are matching grants.

Administrator Allen commented on Towers, Broadband and the ROBIN grant that has been applied for. She also commented on the \$5 million proposal with the State, being sponsored by State Representative Betsy Coffia and State Senator John Damoose; it is for a shared partnership to grant for the allocation and an opportunity for cross house and senate to see how that all goes. She said if it were to happen it would give an opportunity to look at the ARPA funds already committed. She said that \$3.2 million has been committed/allocated of a \$5 million project for Broadband. There is a lot happening and if you add in the multi-County partnership of Community Mental Health, BATA restructure, Airport Authority and they are having growing pains, the Community Health department, LIFT, LCFCC and Board of Health and several others.

The intent was selfish for her but also an opportunity for the departments to share what are all of the moving parts of the County. She continued that she doesn't disagree with setting goals, but there are so many processes, and initiatives it kind of gave her a moment to pause. Where do we put our energy? What process should be used? The CIP for 2023 will be done shortly and how does it play in setting the budget for 2024. The intent was to provide a summary of things currently taking place for Commissioners to have a whole picture and she probably missed something.

Commissioner Kramer thanked Allen for the information.

Commissioner Rexroat asked if Allen has a suggestion or a plan to prioritize what Commissioners are looking at? What would the process be, it cannot all be done, as to the CIP a question, is the County legally obligated to do it all? Start with what is legally obligated to be done as the first order of business and an obligation to the taxpayers. Rexroat said it is a question and a comment at the same time. There are a lot of things that need to be done and there needs to be a plan with the proper order.

Administrator Allen responded to the intent of the CIP and it is done by the Planning Department.

Commissioner Lautner said it is the Planning Commission that prepares the document and does the scoring of projects that are contained in the document. The items need to be scored by Commissioners as there was a good laugh about their scoring as it was all over the board. She gave an example of way up high was replacing police cars, which there is already a plan for that and it is always budgeted and therefore not an issue. Lautner said that is why it is important for her to score. She believes that Commissioner Rexroat is on the right idea and start looking at this and knowing about the HVAC and to get it done once and for all.

Administrator Allen responded and continued on with comments on the CIP. Allen said that when they compile the CIP and scoring/rank, they do it based on the departments information that is provided by the department as to importance and cost. She said that Judge Kromkowski and Cameron Clark would fill out the form so it is on the CIP and they can plan for the future. Allen continued that the Commissioners approve the document or they can re-rank the items based on the information that they see or what their constituents think. She said that may give the Board the top 10 issues for moving forward and to know the financing or when the jail bonds will be paid off in 2027, what is critical in the building for those that work here. Allen said this has been the best opportunity to learn and offered further comments.

Chairman Wessell wanted to make sure that all Commissioners have a chance to respond to the information and what the initial reaction is and he does not think that there will be any action taken. He noted that there is nothing about the Drains or other items.

Commissioner Ross commented that she looked over the CIP and commented on the information contained in the document. Is there an item number? Does 2016-02 mean it was within 2016 when it was first suggested, recommended?

Administrator Allen cannot speak to that.

Commissioner Lautner said that is correct. Discussion and comments ensued.

Commissioner Rexroat said that the Commissioners set the budget and also set the priorities. Brief comments continued.

Commissioner Ross commented that she needs time to digest this or further explanation on it to even make sense of the pages. Brief comments continued and there is not a ton of information on the lines within the CIP. She would request that for future training.

Commissioner Allgaier commented that she needs some clarification, there are 40 minutes left and Goals are not being discussed today and referenced the agenda that says potential Board goals. She asked for clarification. This is not all that we do is fix things.

Commissioner Wessell said that Allen's document contain each Department Head's response to the request to produce goals and needs throughout the next year. It was his understanding that

the meeting today was to understand what was heard from the Department Heads, and they need to talk about essential services.

Commissioner Allgaier asked then if 2023 Board Goals are not being done.

Administrator Allen gave a handout of what the past goals have been and offered comment.

Commissioner O'Rourke commented that goals are fine; however, there is a lot on the plate and there are certain things we can't start because of things that are in progress and those have priority. There are things that we are not engaged in, but the priority should be things that were already started and what the prior Board started.

Commissioner Lautner wanted to point out that what the Planning Commission did is prioritize grouping. The Commissioners could easily come back and adjust the document on our own and even do whatever if we want. She continued that as far as goals go, she is reluctant to pack on the goals until we can prioritize the issues that Commissioners are responsible for on the campus. Lautner said that we also need to start looking out that this building will probably need to be reroofed, and at that point do we do asphalt shingles or do we go metal and that will be a large expenditure at that time. Lautner also commented on Drain Districts and proposals and they are alarming to her as those are going to be a hefty tax on the residents in the County.

Commissioner Kramer asked Commissioner Lautner when was the last survey done.

Commissioner Lautner said that the Planning Commission prioritized the CIP and it is done every year. Discussion and comments ensued.

Chairman Wessell commented that he has been on the Board for eight years and he knows that it is received by the Board of Commissioners, but not approved and it is not used for budgeting or establishing goals. Wessell thinks it needs to be given more attention.

Commissioner Allgaier commented that it would seem like there should be a work session to spend some time on this as it cannot be done in half an hour and at that point the Commissioners could also do a discussion in addition to some critical needs. She said she has been on the Board for 2.5 years, but what she has observed sitting in the audience for ten years is the idea of chunking off critical pieces every year – she hears that you need a Facilities Manager and it was a goal in 2022, but not dealt with. She also hears what Administrator Allen is saying about IT. There are a couple critical things, but beyond that there are a couple other goals beyond the building that Commissioners representing the people of this County should address. Allgaier hopes that a work session could be scheduled to deal with this in the detail it deserves. There is a lot of work here.

Commissioner Rexroat said that the CIP has a very condensed justification regarding needs and if Commissioners are going to be working on this through a work session, is the information that created the document available to look at in more detail to help Commissioners prioritize. To give input, he would want to see the documentation to make a decision, not just take the word of the Planning Commission. He would like to see the backup.

Administrator Allen said it is a pretty comprehensive assessment and offered comments to Commissioners.

Commissioner Ross commented on looking at what Administrator Allen has presented and what has been discussed, she still feels that as a group of seven Commissioners we can come up with some goals and/or priorities in just how to tackle the job going forward or some type of commitment to the County as to the seriousness of how to figure all of this out. She sees that summed up in Organizational/Strategic priorities. Ross continued with four new members on the Board and a ton of information that Commissioners are being given each meeting, she feels like she would like to say as a commitment to the Community that we are taking this very seriously. There are some overarching goals that we want to make sure we are taking care of as strongly as people are asking us to do. Ross said she agrees that today is not the place to set goals, but she thinks that this needs discussion and needs to be finished with an agreement that there will time spent to figure this out. She also thinks that the County may have to hire a grant writer as she does not know where all of this money is going to come from unless there is somebody within the ranks that can push this forward. Commissioners owe it to the Community to show we are going to take this job seriously. Goals are about saying what we plan to do.

Chairman Wessell said that he read the document and found it very educational and was overwhelmed. He focused on 2023 goals for each department and it is overwhelming. He questioned how it will all ever be addressed. Wessell would like Administrator Allen to hear from each Commissioner as to what our ideas are and where we are heading. What do you think about the summary of services? Comments continued.

Chairman Wessell commented on the document where she represented all of the needs through the departments or statements about 2023 goals and all of the outstanding projects that “we” are aware of — the building needs, the park needs, the boat needs, the storage needs, the expansion needs, what are your priorities. The Administrator will come back with recommendations and suggestions; however she needs to hear from all Commissioners as to what she needs to focus on. Wessell said that is what he believes Commissioners have a responsibility to do.

Commissioner Allgaier commented that what she is struggling with is that our goals go beyond what the building needs. Chairman Wessell offered comments and Allgaier asked if just comments on how to run the county? As we have very little money to spend every year, we need to be very careful, her experience is a little baby chair and chunk it down, she really hears a Facilities Manager and it has been discussed for a long time. Allgaier offered more comments. Allgaier commented about what does Allen feel she needs to run the place better?

Commissioner Ross commented that she agrees with Commissioner Allgaier; however, that is why we need overarching goals or organizational strategy to tackle this multitude of projects. She thinks that Commissioners need to agree on what is the focus. She has a list that she would be happy to send to the Administrator and she went through the document and made a list.

Commissioner Wessell commented that it is important to hear from each Commissioner as to what is being communicated to the Administrator.

Commissioner Ross commented on a grant writer as she doesn't think that they can only rely on Galla or a few others that have the skills. She totally wants to move forward with succession planning. She continued that sustainability of natural resources and serving on the Solid Waste Council, she would like all decisions to be made with that core belief that we all agree that our natural resources should be at the center of decision making. Looking at the Facilities Manager and she knows the three maintenance men, but they cannot do it all. Ross thinks that a wage study – she doesn't know that she totally agrees that it has to come after the structure study and she believes that they go hand in hand. She also commented on employee benefits not being the draw that they used to be and the need to be proactive to get new people coming to the County for the right reason. Ross said that communication needs to be done better and the web site needs to be stellar and shine to show the community that we know what we are doing. The policy and procedures, there is so much to know and she would appreciate a Commissioner policy and procedure manual.

Commissioner Kramer commented that she hears both Commissioners Ross and Allgaier that they are looking at the overarching goals and it should be noted that Commissioners are functioning soundly as a Board and if that can be continued, and continue checking in with the Administrator, and making sure that Commissioners are well educated and have the list that the Planning Commission can give to Commissioners and have the conversation about the dozen or half dozen that they may like to prioritize, that would be a good way to move together as a team.

Commissioner Rexroat commented that when Commissioners talk about goals, we need to talk about a mission statement. You cannot know what your goals are if you don't know what your mission is. Rexroat continued that he thinks MCL (Michigan Compiled Laws) that authorizes County Government and what we are supposed to do and the core functions, need to be the first responsibility. There is a fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers of this County to spend their money wisely and to make sure that we are taking care of first priorities. Those things that are legally required to be provided, those things that maintain facilities that County residents have already made an investment in. He doesn't have an exact list, but would look at guiding principles and would look for feedback on that. Rexroat hopes this Board would look at things the same way as to what we are required to do first and then work down the list. Rexroat is not opposed to a Facilities Manager, as in many cases, we would have taken better care of our taxpayers money if someone full-time were here as it is a bigger job than it has been in the past. Rexroat continued that he looks at what authorizes Commissioners to be here, what has to be taken care of, and that is the priorities he would express.

Commissioner O'Rourke said that Commissioner Rexroat is a hard act to follow. O'Rourke had a few things to cover; however the obligation is health, safety and welfare of the county. He is concerned about 9-1-1 and he knows one Dispatcher has been working alone at night and what happens if she trips or falls. O'Rourke continued that we have to be financially responsible, but he is concerned, as a former police officer, about building safety. If you bring the Health Department in, undocumented aliens in, we do not know what is out there. This building is used a lot and continued with comments about National News, building improvements and that Rexroat covered it all.

Commissioner Lautner said she wants to see us concentrate on providing the legally obligated and legally mandated services that we are obligated to provide in the most effective and least

costly way possible. She does not want to see any new taxes and she believes that we are in for a bumpy ride here in the County if you look at housing, taxation, energy costs, and the projected energy costs. Lautner continued that we should be doing what we absolutely have to do to maintain quality mandated service to our taxpayers and not adding anything else on. She thinks that Commissioners need to look at this facility and what the Commissioners are obligated to do to this facility, to make it last as long as absolutely possible. It was said when it was built it would be a 100-year building and there is a ways to go. The wall needs to be fixed, the HVAC needs to be fixed, facelifting within the facility itself, and have to keep in mind, it was an extremely interesting graph on page 85, with the population and trends. The younger populations are steadily dropping and we are not replacing our youth. As other discussions go forward with the Juvenile Detention center, that be kept in mind. The senior population is rising. Lautner continued that she is also doing her part for the youth in this County and housing them. She also said communications came up and she believes that communication is very important, she also has a great concern about the County's representation for BATA and greater concern and look at the Authority as there was no concept that the Articles of Incorporation could be changed without the Commissioners' input. The County's representation is being dwindled and this needs to be tackled.

Chairman Wessell commented that he doesn't have the list that Commissioner Ross has, but the number one on his list is to take care of what we have and that must be done. He wants to make sure that staff working here are comfortable, not too hot or too cold, that the building is taken care of as well as the parks. Other than the mandated services, we must take care of what we have and that has to be a part of what we do. Wessell addressed partnerships, which involve BATA, Community Mental Health, Youth Detention – we have to foster those partnerships that give us opportunity to serve our residents and still do it fiscally responsible. He continued that he shares the concern about representation. It cannot all be done, but the County must work with its partners, including the nonprofit partners. Wessell referenced some of the pages. It must be figured out how to work on housing and that is not building bricks and mortar with County funds, there are ways he thinks to utilize Community Partners. Wessell referenced being proud of participating today in the statewide septic systems, as we are one of 11 counties taking care of the environment and he knows it was controversial, but it is coming and we must look for ways to take care of the environment. It doesn't mean we have to spend money, but we must be responsible. Wessell continued that he did have on his list that there is an opportunity for the Board to do more than mandated responsibility if the residents want us to do that and we have to be careful to listen to the residents and do those things that they want – seniors, young families, and they are also business people. What can be done so that we are open to doing nonmandated things and do it in a careful fashion and as much as possible. Commissioners need to not do silly stuff. Brief comments continued.

Commissioner Allgaier commented that she hears that we have to plan for energy costs and one of the ways that can be done is by planning for solar. If there are grants out there that the County can get, we can plan for higher energy costs in the future by creating our own energy here. She also commented on EV (Electric Vehicle) and offered comments about charging places. She also endorses and supports housing and there are a lot of partners and a whole lot that can be done without spending money. Comments about funding sources.

Chairman Wessell asked for questions.



Administrator Allen commented about what she is hearing from everyone that we want to look at everything going forward at under the lens of fiscal responsibility and that is the number one goal. Underneath that, and it wasn't by accident that, she put the three segments to Commissioners – people/positions, property/facilities, and partnerships. That may help to build structure to create a goal or concept. It can then be broken down. She offered further comments and commented on where are the gaps, moving the discussion forward and potential next steps, classify and identify the gaps. Allen said we still need to talk programs and brainstorm for next steps. Allen offered additional comments and referenced the CIP.

Commissioner Rexroat asked when the CIP will be updated. Executive Assistant Laurel E. Evans responded that last year it was late summer.

Commissioners Allgaier and Lautner said that the Commissioners need to prioritize and that is where it should begin.

Administrator Allen commented on using the plan that was provided and have Commissioners pick out the top ten. Comments continued and discussion ensued with Commissioners about potential ranking.

Chief Deputy County Clerk Zywicki commented that between herself, Interim Finance Director Hartesvelt, and Administrator Allen and the document they are looking at, a lot of the items have been taken care of in and before Commissioners diving in on this, perhaps it needs to be reviewed as to what has been done and already has a grant.

Administrator Allen explained on the review and how to proceed.

Commissioner Rexroat agrees and likes Zywicki's suggestion. He would like a real list versus a list.

Chairman Wessell commented perhaps a meeting in early May and a revised list, with items completed already.

Commissioner Allgaier does not like waiting until May 2023 for Goals.

Chairman Wessell said he is only talking about the CIP and fiscal and what is actually on the list and if there is funding. Wessell asked Zywicki and she would say in May they could do this. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Allgaier asked if there is time after the Executive Session in April for a work session for Board goals.

Chairman Wessell said Commissioners can always bring an idea to the Commission table and it can be done in any month that Commissioners want to. He thinks that it is timely to do that, so if you want to bring something to April, bring it.

Commissioner Allgaier asked if Chairman Wessell is saying no goals this year. She said that they are talking two different things here.

Commissioner Ross said that is why this is confusing.

Chairman Wessell said there were goals coming from the Departments, the Administrator, the Committees and we have them on paper. We use the Executive meeting to talk through them. Anyone at this table can add anything to the Agenda at any time.

Commissioner Allgaier explained that we normally have a list before Commissioners. Allgaier responded again to Wessell that they are discussing two different things.

Commissioner Kramer addressed Commissioner Allgaier that we need to define where we are going before we can get these overarching goals because we have some pressing issues that have to be attended to and which are the most pressing so that we can move forward with those and then define. It is like knowing who you are, we need to know who we are and where we are going before we can say how we want to get there. Brief comments continued.

Commissioner Allgaier said that is not what she is saying. What has been done for the last four or five years is to have goals for the Board of Commissioners and then also do this stuff too. She is very concerned with postponing goals until May.

Commissioner O'Rourke asked what kind of Goals she has in mind?

Commissioner Allgaier asked if he reviewed the prior years. The goals for facilities would be more specific, so what we are talking about here and it is very important, what does the County need, the building need, the people need to function, and yes that is extremely important; however, what does the 2023 Board of Commissioners have for a vision beyond that or is that all we are going to do.

Commissioner O'Rourke said there are so many things to get done, if we get one thing done, it is done and move on.

Commissioner Allgaier said there have always been Goals.

Chairman Wessell said that due to time constraints, he suggests they add to the April Executive Agenda 2023 Board Priorities or Goals and everyone come prepared to have that discussion at that time. He asked if it was acceptable.

Commissioner O'Rourke has no goals other than what is on the table.

Commissioner Ross said that Commissioner Rexroat mentioned our mission statement. There is something on the County's website and it is not good, so she will not read it. There needs to be discussion about a mission statement.

Commissioner Rexroat said the devil is in the details.

Commissioner Lautner said it is futile. If you, as a Commissioner, want to bring your goals or plans for programs forward in April, 2023, and tell everyone what your goals will be, she thinks that is just fine. Lautner said what "we" did last year and Commissioners only sent forward what all could agree on. Commissioners have direction when you take your oath of office and

become a Commissioner. She continued that we know what to do and that is our mission statement. We all have our mission statement and that is when we run and tell our constituents what we are going to do and how we are going to do it to the best of our ability or whatever. It is all there and that is fine. Lautner can see Commissioners wasting hours hammering over this stuff, unless it is something that we can all agree on and thinks that this is a waste of time. Let's do the County business and move forward.

Chairman Wessell said he would make sure that it is on the April agenda so each person has an opportunity to talk about what we wish the County would do and have discussion.

Public Comment:

The following individuals spoke in person: Lois Bahle, and Steve Mikowski.

Commissioner Comments:

- Chairman Wessell said that last year we got in trouble as we set a goal that was not well planned out. We need to have plans and make sure goals are well thought out with an implementation process.
- Commissioner Kramer commented that we are talking about goals and it is to serve the County as a whole. She asked each to remember that we are here to work together and do the best that we can.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned by Chairman Wessell at 5:53 p.m.

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Ty Wessell, Chairman  
Leelanau County Board of Commissioners

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