

**Leelanau County Board of Commissioners**  
**Special Session – Monday, June 10, 2024**  
Tentative minutes

*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=2751#video>*

Meeting called to order by Chairman Ty Wessell at 10:34 a.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:

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America followed by a Moment of Silence.

<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

Guests present.

Public Comment:

None.

Commissioner Comments:

- Commissioner Rexroat stated that looking at the agenda he wasn't sure that since it stated Potential Offer and that the Board whittles the decision down to one or two persons that this Board is ready for that decision without another round of interviews and checking references. He commented that he doesn't believe the Board is in a position to make that kind of decision today.
- Commissioner O'Rourke commented that he would like to establish a six month or one year plan that if the first-place candidate doesn't stay more than that then the second-place candidate doesn't have to interview again.
- Commissioner Lautner stated she understands Commissioner O'Rourke's comments. She said the Board can make that decision this year but not beyond December 31, 2024. Lautner continued that the interviews would be available to see and could easily as a Board do that, and all of this would depend on the individual.
- Chairman Wessell agrees with Commissioner Rexroat that this is going to be the most important job this Board is going to do.

Purpose of Meeting – Discussion/Potential Action:

County Administrator/CFO Candidate Dialogue/Second Interviews:

MLI Consultant Chet Janik gave an overview and described the process if a candidate is selected from interviews today. He instructed the Board and gave alternatives to making a decision today and referenced other jurisdictions that he has recently worked with that followed similar plans.

Chairman Wessell announced that each Commissioner during the interview will ask one question and depending on how much time is left there could be another round of Commissioner questions asked of the candidate.

Commissioner Rexroat stated that the Board is not under any obligation to pick a candidate and is not suggesting that is the case here, but it needs to be done right.

Chairman Wessell called for a recess at 10:45 a.m. and called the meeting back to order at 10:59 a.m.

The process was consistent for each candidate with each candidate giving opening statements followed by questions by the Commissioners of the candidate and then each candidate was given the opportunity to question the Commissioners.

The following candidates were interviewed:

- Michael Belsky began at 11:00 a.m.

*(Clerk's note: Interim Finance Director Cathy Hartesvelt brought in a note at approximately 11:20 a.m. and it was given to Chairman Wessell, then to Commissioners Kramer, Rexroat, Ross, Allgaier – where it stopped.)*

Chairman Wessell thanked Belky for his time and Belky thanked the Board. Chairman Wessell called for a lunch recess at 12:12 p.m. and called the meeting back to order at 1:00 p.m.

- Mark Justin began at 1:00 p.m..

Chairman Wessell thanked Justin for his time and called for a recess at 1:59 p.m. Wessell called the meeting back to order at 2:29 p.m.

- Tracy Byard began at 2:30 p.m.

Commissioner Kramer left the meeting at 3:02 p.m.

Chairman Wessell thanked Byard for her time and called for a recess at 3:26 p.m. Wessell called the meeting back to order at 3:51 p.m.

- Kip Belcher began at 3:51 p.m.

Chairman Wessell thanked Belcher for his time and called for a recess at 4:51 p.m. Wessell called the meeting back to order at 4:55 p.m.

Janik stated that the four final candidates have very diverse backgrounds and commented that very few employees were able to take time to show up and have discussions with the candidates prior to their interviews.

Commissioner Rexroat suggested that maybe the Board should give the staff time to watch the interviews and offer comments, if they wanted.

Commissioner Allgaier suggested that Human Resources Director Heather Cade could send out an email and see if employees would like to send comments to the Board.

Commissioner discussion ensued on how to move forward after the top two candidates are selected.

Janik took a straw poll of the candidates the Board supports:

Commissioner Lautner – Tracy Byard

Commissioner O'Rourke – Kip Belcher and Tracy Byard

Commissioner Allgaier – Michael Belsky

Commissioner Ross – Michael Belsky and Kip Belcher

Commissioner Rexroat – Michael Belsky and Kip Belcher, with reservations.

Chairman Wessell – Michael Belsky and Kip Belcher, with reservations.

Janik announced that Mark Justin has been eliminated.

Commissioner Rexroat stated he is not ready to offer the job to even the two names that he mentioned, and stated that the Board needs to get this right and firing on all cylinders. He commented that he would rather do this process all over again then do it wrong because there has been too much done wrong.

Commissioner Allgaier commented that she liked Belcher and was disappointed that he wasn't in the pool in 2022. She stated that the Board changed the job description to include knowledge and education with Finance to include the title of CFO (Chief Financial Officer) and she doesn't see how the Board can justify hiring someone without those specific skills. She continued that the Board cannot justify changing the position if the Board isn't going to look for somebody with different credentials. She stated that Belcher would make a wonderful Administrator but the Board has changed that to Administrator/CFO.

Commissioner Rexroat asked if the Board chooses two candidates, then what is the process of who gets involved in reaching out and checking on them? Janik replied that he would do that on behalf of the Board in consultation with the Chairman of the Board.

Commissioner Ross asked if the Board is allowed to reach out to people we know that know the candidates? Janik replied that board members would need to be careful because sometimes people ask the wrong questions, so it is best to leave that up to him.

Commissioner discussion ensued regarding the candidate's qualifications that did not receive more than two votes.

**Commissioner consensus for Chairman Wessell to work with Janik on references for Michael Belsky and Kip Belcher and create a plan for next steps.**

Chairman Wessell stated a Special Session will be posted for Friday, June 14, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

Potential Offer of the Position of County Administrator/CFO:

No action taken.

Public Comment:

None.

Commissioner Comments:

None.

Adjournment:

Chairman Wessell adjourned the meeting at 5:13 p.m.

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Ty Wessell, Chairman  
Leelanau County Board of Commissioners

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Michelle L. Crocker, Leelanau County Clerk  
Clerk, Leelanau County Board of Commissioners