

**Leelanau County Board of Commissioners**  
**Special Session – Thursday, December 12, 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=2812#video>

Meeting called to order by Chairman Ty Wessell 9:50 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 was recited and followed by a moment of silence.

<u>Roll Call:</u>	District #1	Vacant	
	#2	James O'Rourke	PRESENT
	#3	Doug Rexroat	PRESENT
	#4	Ty Wessell	PRESENT
	#5	Kama Ross	ABSENT (arrived at 9:58 a.m.)
	#6	Gwenne Allgaier	PRESENT
	#7	Melinda C. Lautner	PRESENT

Guests present.

Chairman Wessell announced before we have an agenda set we will have Public Comment and then Commissioner comments. He continued that we will review the process for today to make sure we all know how we will do it and we can address Commissioner Lautner's concerns at that time.

Commissioner Lautner requested a five-minute break and setup the room as discussed from the Special Session held on Tuesday, December 10, 2024. She stated there are supposed to be tables placed around the presentation table.

Chairman Wessell stated we will do what "I" just said, which is to take Public Comment, Commissioner Comment and then will review how "this" Board of Commissioners, meaning all six of us, want to handle it.

Commissioner Allgaier said, "And don't scare the poor guys off."

Commissioner O'Rourke said, "And we're not moving that table (Presentation Table) anywhere, there is too much wires."

Chairman Wessell asked, "Is there any Public Comment this morning?"

Public Comment: (3 minutes – Agenda Specific)

None.

Chairman Wessell asked, "Is there any Commissioner Comment this morning?"

Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner O'Rourke said, "Pass."

Commissioner Lautner said as discussed on Tuesday when we set up this meeting, she would like a five-minute break to slide the presentation table back and set the white tables up for Commissioners-Elect to be able to see the faces of the Administrator candidates who are interviewing.

Maintenances Worker Duane Flaska arrived with two white tables and stated the presentation table has too many wires around it to be moved.

Commissioner Lautner stated she has seen it moved back just a couple feet to accommodate more people around it before. Commissioner O'Rourke disagreed and stated the presentation table is already in poor shape. Commissioner Lautner continued that the tables Flaska brought in can be placed on the sides of the Commissioners seating arrangements or right in front of where the Commissioners are sitting.

Chairman Wessell announced that before we reach decisions on how we are going to handle "it" are there any other Commissioner comments?

Commissioner Allgaier said she suggests that it is fine if the Commissioners-Elect sit here (Commissioners seats) next to the Commissioners so they can see the Administrator candidate's expressions when they ask their questions at the end after the Commissioners are done with their portion of the interview questions. She continued that she does not think it appropriate for them to be in the rotation of the current sitting Commissioners until the very end, which she thinks is a compromise.

Commissioner O'Rourke commented that he only has 19 days left, but the Commissioners-Elect have a vested interest.

Commissioner Allgaier and Commissioner Lautner both said, "We are the present Board of Commissioners."

Commissioner O'Rourke said to Commissioner Lautner that she too only has 19 days left.

Commissioner Rexroat stated this is not an ideal setup, but this is not for him a sword to die on and let's get it done. He continued that whatever he needs to do, he wants to make it clear that they are here as guests at "this" Commissioner's table. Rexroat commented that during public comment that can be made clear or in the opening comments clear. He said he can't remember but that it seemed like we talked about the ordering of questioning and he would like to get back to that a little bit. What did we discuss? Because he is trying to remember that the Board was going to ask their questions and then the Commissioners-Elect or was it the other way around and they give us their input before we ask ours?

Commissioner Allgaier replied to Commissioner Rexroat that the Board asks their questions first.

Commissioner Rexroat continued the Board would ask questions first, then the Commissioners-Elect questions, who would then give the Board their input, and then this Board would

deliberate. He said the Commissioners-Elect would sit here until the questioning process was done and then the Commissioners-Elect would leave this table (Commissioners') for deliberations. Rexroat commented this is not ideal and is not a fan but he will accept it.

Commissioner Allgaier agreed with Commissioner Rexroat.

Chairman Wessell stated he is appreciative of Administrator Lewis creating the road to get this set up today. He continued that he appreciates the fact that we have the Commissioners-Elect here and glad they are willing to be part of the process. Wessell said he is glad we are all willing to consider their input and he hopes that his suggestion is to hear everybody and that the Commissioner-Elect sit with the us (Commissioners) within our seating area, we ask our questions first, then the Commissioners-Elect participate asking their questions, then we will dismiss them (Commissioners-Elect) to the public and we will debate and discuss out decision.

Interim Administrator Lewis asked for clarification that dismissal will be after the second interview and Chairman Wessell confirmed. Wessell asked Commissioner Lautner if she can "live with that".

Commissioner Lautner replied that she cannot. She said she thinks this is dangerous precedence to set to bring public up to the Board of Commissioners table for the very next commission. Lautner stated it is a terrible precedence to set to bring public up here.

Chairman Wessell said, "Here is where I am at."

Commissioner Lautner continued that at a Board of Commissioners Special meeting.... Chairman Wessell said, "Let me make myself clear, and I hear you."

Commissioner Lautner continued that this is a Special meeting and not a work session.... Chairman Wessell said, "This is so important and Okay, I hear you."

Commissioner Lautner continued that when we set this up and .... Chairman Wessell said, "The Chair has heard you, and I." Commissioner Lautner continued and said, "Mr. Chairman, you interrupted me in the middle of a comment and I am trying to be very respectful because I did have the floor."

Interim Administrator Lewis said, "The hell with it, we will set it up."

Chairman Wessell said, "Commissioner Lautner this process is too important for us not to agree."

Interim Administrator Lewis said, "You will have my letter of resignation within an hour."

Commissioner Lautner said, "Richard, don't be that way."

Lewis said, "I don't need you."

Commissioner Allgaier said, "Melinda, how about if you not be that way?"

Commissioner O'Rourke left the room saying as soon as this is done and he would be right back in.

Commissioner Lautner stated we set a process....

Lewis said, "No, you're done."

Commissioner Lautner continued and said, "Ok, thank you, this will just take a second."

Commissioner Allgaier said, "You may have just lost us an Administrator."

Chairman Wessell said, "I would like to try to finish the comment I was trying to make. This process is "so" important to this County. I am willing to give anything to make sure that the six of us do it together in a very positive way. So, even though...."

Commissioner Lautner said, "And we did, and we did I agree. Because we did agree on that very point that it is very important, very important."

Chairman Wessell said, "Even though I strongly disagree with Commissioner Lautner, I agree that we ought to comply with her wishes so that we can continue this important process."

Commissioner Allgaier said, "I have one more thing. Commissioner Lautner would you please change places with me because I won't be able to see over someone's head."

Commissioner Lautner said, "Yes, sure."

Chairman Wessell called for a five-minute break at 9:57 a.m. and called the meeting back to order at 9:59 am.

Purpose of Meeting – Discussion/Potential Action: Wessell  
County Administrator Candidate Dialogue and Possible Selection of Candidate for position of County Administrator. Michigan Leadership Institute Consultant Chet Janik was present via Zoom.

The interview process was consistent for each candidate with each candidate giving opening statements followed by questions by the Commissioners and Commissioners-Elect of the candidate and then each candidate was given the opportunity to ask their own questions of the Commissioners.

10:00 a.m. – Mark Brown

Chairman Wessell thanked Mr. Brown for his time. Chairman Wessell called for a break at 11:00 a.m. and called the meeting back to order at 11:12 a.m.

11:12 a.m. – James Dyer

Chairman Wessell thanked Mr. Dyer for this time. Chairman Wessell called for a break at 12:07 p.m. called the meeting back to order at 12:17 p.m.

Chairman Wessell stated that Janik and Lewis will be kicking this portion off. Janik via Zoom and Lewis at the presentation table. Lewis will be collecting the 3x5 cards with the candidate that each Board member has chosen as the top pick and also the 3x5 cards from the Commissioners-Elect with their top pick. Wessell explained after the cards are collected that the Board will hear from the Commissioners-Elect and the Board will have their discussion.

Janik confirmed that the Board does have the sample motion when a decision is made to make for the record.

Interim Administrator Lewis read for the record that all six Board of Commissioners have selected Mr. James Dyer. Lewis continued that the cards from Commissioners-Elect were split two to two for their candidate choice. He also stated there were some staff comments received in the suggestion box.

Chairman Wessell stated he would like to hear any public comment from Commissioners-Elect if they wish to speak about their choice they selected.

Commissioners-Elect Campbell, Robbins, Yoder and Walters spoke to the Board regarding their choice. Chairman Wessel thanked the Commissioners-Elect for their input.

*#340-12122024 Special Session*

**MOTION BY REXROAT THAT THE LEELANAU COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MOVE THAT JAMES DYER BE TENTATIVELY OFFERED THE POSITION OF LEELANAU COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR AND THAT CHAIRMAN WESSELL AND VICE-CHAIRMAN REXROAT ARE AUTHORIZED TO NEGOTIATE WITH JAMES DYER ON A PROPOSED EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS. SECONDED BY O'ROURKE.**

Discussion ensued.

**ROLL CALL: Rexroat – YES; Ross – YES; Wessell – YES; Allgaier – YES;**

**Lautner – YES; O'Rourke – YES.**

**AYES – 6 NO – 0**

**MOTION CARRIED.**

Public Comment:

The following individual spoke: Rick Robbins

Commissioner Comments:

- ▶ Commissioner Allgaier wished everyone a Merry Christmas.
- ▶ Commissioner Rexroat thanked everyone for working through the process.
- ▶ Commissioner O'Rourke stated he thinks it will be a pretty smooth transition with Interim Administrator Lewis, Executive Assistant Lauren Cypher and Mr. James Dyer.
- ▶ Chairman Wessell thanked Interim Administrator Lewis.

Adjournment:

Chairman Wessell adjourned the meeting at 12:37 p.m.

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Ty Wessell, Chairman  
Leelanau County Board of Commissioners

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