

CLERK
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JOINT MANISTEE/BENZIE COURT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 13, 2015
3:00 P.M.

Manistee County Courthouse and
Government Center
Board of Commissioners Meeting Room
Manistee, Michigan

AGENDA

- 1) Call to Order by the Chairman.
- 2) Approval of Minutes from the Tuesday, September 8, 2015 Joint Court Committee Meeting. (APPENDIX A)
- 3) Discussion regarding FY 2015/16 wage and fringe benefit issues.
- 4) Other Items from Committee Members, Judges and Staff.
 - a) AS 400 Lease
- 5) Miscellaneous Information: No meetings scheduled for the remainder of 2015.
- 6) Adjournment.

(APPENDIX A-1)

**BENZIE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**448 COURT PLACE – BEULAH, MI 49617 – (231) 882-9671
www.benzieco.net**

JOINT MANISTEE-BENZIE COURT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, September 8, 2015
3:00 P.M.

Benzie County Courthouse & Government Center
County Commissioners Room

MINUTES

Members Present: Vance Bates and Coury Carland, Benzie County Commissioners
Jeff Dontz, Richard Schmidt and Karen Goodman, Manistee County
Commissioners

Others Present: Tom Kaminski, Manistee County Controller/Administrator; Karl Sparks,
Benzie County Administrator; Judge Thompson, 19th Circuit Court; Pat
Heins, Circuit Court Administrator; Judge Mead, Benzie County Probate;
Judge Brunner, Manistee County Probate; Connie Krusniak, Director,
Family Division; Jane Johnson; Cameron Clark, Director of Youth
Services; Maridee Cutler; Lisa Sagala, Personnel Officer/County
Administrator's Office; Frank Waltherhouse, Benzie County Commissioner
and Dawn Olney, County Clerk.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Vance Bates.

Motion by Dontz, seconded by Carland, to approve the minutes of August 11, 2015 as presented. Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Discussion regarding FY 2015-16 budget including wage and fringe benefit issues.

Mr. Kaminski stated that Manistee County adopted a tentative budget at the August meeting; is available in the County Clerk's office and on the web site for the last month; no wage increases in the wages in that budget, but all court employees have since received a 1% increase. Just about all that the courts requested is being granted.

Court employees and all non-union staff and elected offices have all receive the same increase over the last five years.

He also stated that to have an HRA is not saving any money.

Judge Brunner stated that the courts are the only one that has intentionally shrunk the personnel and the amount of money that is being expended. They are saying real savings in the consolidation. They are down two positions.

Judge Thompson asks where the money has gone.

Ms. Goodman inquires of salary feasibility studies – 2009. Judge Thompson does have access to court studies.

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Mr. Dontz asks about the number with the courts – Judge Thompson says he has a hard time speaking to the Benzie number but there has been an increase in Manistee.

Mr. Kaminski stated that the 1% increase to the court + CRP reimbursement + Benzie County reimbursement was about \$3,000.

Judge Brunner says you have the true joint court - Manistee Probate 2 persons; District – 8 people; only one of those person is connected with Benzie.

Mr. Sparks says that with Benzie County the board set the budget today; it will be available for two weeks for public viewing and hopefully adopt on the 22nd; there are no proposed wage increases for staff in the budget; 4 of 5 union contracts are going to arbitration with a 0% increase offer on the table.

Mr. Schmidt stated if Benzie County doesn't give raises then what are we to do.

Ms. Goodman says she hears the concerns from the court. We need to have some sort of a plan moving forward.

Judge Mead says we can still give quality service with where we are at – we want to see our people rewarded.

Comm Bates says the financial situation in Benzie County is bleak – September 18 we will be in mediation with the union contracts.

Judge Thompson says you could increase the personal leave or HRA if not wages.

Jane Johnson, Attorney, regarding representation of indigent individuals.

Ms. Johnson stated that she is under contact for indigent client for Manistee County for the felonies; juvenile; probate court and the family division (includes neglect/abuse and delinquent). is concerned because there has been no discussion on increasing the court appointed contract in 20 years – this is unconscionable. She stated that she receives \$2,900 per month for all of the contracts that she has. She received \$600/month for JV an NA and averages 30 – 40 hours per month and only makes \$600 per month. There is a dramatic increase in felony cases due to the increase in the manufacture and use of methamphetamines and heroine and other life destroying drug and drug activity. If those alleged criminals have children, then those children are removed from the home.

Felony contracts involve a much greater time commitment; in August she had 42 hearings to appear for and for each hearing you can anticipate at least one hour of preparation if not more; Sept she has had 28 hearings so far.

There are requirements they have to follow too. You have loyal people like her to do this work out of a sense of duty, public service and commitment. She is not able to do private practice any longer because of the commitment here. You don't pay for her health care, office, she has no staff. Asks both counties to take this into serious consideration. Please consider an increase.

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Judge Mead says this will have to be carried over to next year's budget.
Ms. Johnson says she doesn't like sitting here listening to this -- I will not get a pension.
Ms. Goodman requests that she get comparisons for us.
Judge Thompson indicated that they are looking at this at SCAO.

Other Items from Committee Members, Judges and Staff: None

Next meeting: Tuesday, October 13, 2015 @ 3:00 p.m. in Manistee -- If Needed

Motion by Carland, seconded by Schmidt, to adjourn at 4:41 p.m. Ayes: All Nays: None
Motion carried.

MANISTEE COUNTY

BENZIE COUNTY

Jeff Dontz, Commissioner

K. Vance Bates, Chair

Karen Goodman, Commissioner

Corry Carland, Commissioner

Richard Schmidt, Commissioner