

# County Administrator's Digest

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## **MEA CULPA**

The last Digest I included two articles that I attributed to Circuit Court Administrator Kevin Bowling and both were authored by Judge John Hulsing for the Advance Newspaper. Thanks to Judge Hulsing for his contribution and my apologies for the mis-attribution.

## **MLGMA CONFERENCE**

Keith and I attended the 2012 MLGMA (Michigan Local Government Management Association) Winter Institute in East Lansing last week. Other Ottawa County based managers in attendance included: Bill Cargo, Grand Haven Charter Township Manager; Patrick Waterman, Hudsonville City Manager; Gordon Gallagher, Spring Lake Township Manager; Karen Doyle, Zeeland Assistant City Manager; Craig Bessinger, Ferrysburg City Manager; Sam Janson, Grand Haven Assistant City Manager; Pat McGinnis, Grand Haven City Manager, and Ryan Cotton, Spring Lake Village Manager who was just named Holland City Manager Wednesday evening. Congratulations to both Ryan and the City of Holland with best wishes for a long and successful partnership!

The theme of the conference was "Coaching a New Season" and included sessions on topics such as performance management & process improvement; shared services best practices; local government reaction to EVIP (Economic Vitality Incentive Program); credit rating analysis; accreditations, why we do it; legal ramifications of social media; street design; public safety management and some good leadership focused general sessions as well. MSU Athletic Director Mark Hollis gave a great presentation when he compared his role to that of a city/county manager.

I completed my term as Immediate Past President of MLGMA. I'm grateful to the Board of Commissioners for allowing me to serve as President and the rotation before and after the year as President. Congratulations to Keith Van Beek for his election elected to the MLGMA Board of Directors. It was old home week as Curtis Holt, City Manager of Wyoming and native of the Village of Spring Lake assumed the President seat for MLGMA. April McGrath, former Grand Haven Assistant City Manager was there and has recently been appointed as City Manager



of Ferndale.

Finally, Pat McGinnis, Grand Haven City Manager received the 2012 MLGMA Excellence Award for Local Government Management. Congratulations to Pat and we are certainly proud of his accomplishments. Pat is a rabid Spartan fan and I'm sure he was thrilled when his name and award was mentioned during the radio broadcast of the Spartan basketball game earlier this week! The related news article follows:

### **GH City Manager receives management award**

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Contributed photo Wyoming City Manager Curtis Holt, president elect of the Michigan Local Government Management Association (I), Grand Haven City Manager Pat McGinnis, and Farmington Hills City Manager Steve Brock, current association president.

Grand Haven City Manager Pat McGinnis received the Excellence Award for local government management at the annual meeting of the Michigan Local Government Management Association conference.

The award is given annually to one manager or assistant manager who has distinguished themselves personally and professionally during the previous year.

"Pat continually displays devotion to the Grand Haven community and the greater Tri-Cities area," said association President Steve Brock, city manager of Farmington Hills. Brock cited McGinnis' local volunteer efforts and his devotion to the municipal management profession among the reasons McGinnis was selected.

"This is a well-deserved award and I'm proud to present it to an old friend," Brock told the group.

During 2011, in addition to his volunteer efforts, McGinnis coordinated cooperative agreements with both Grand Haven Area Public Schools and Ottawa County.

"I'm happy to say that during 2011, we (the City) were able to continue delivering the same, if not better, quality service, for a significantly reduced cost," McGinnis said in a press release. "It is a humbling experience to receive this award from my peers; they are an accomplished group of dedicated professionals."

McGinnis began his career in municipal management in Farmington Hills as an intern in 1987, under the guidance of then City Manager Bill Costick. After completing his graduate education at Michigan State University, McGinnis accepted his first full-time position with the City of Wauwatosa, Wi. In 1990, McGinnis moved to West Branch, Mi., where he met his wife Tina and started a family. The week before the 2003 Coast Guard Festival, Pat, Tina, Molly, Mitch and Mary moved to Grand Haven where McGinnis accepted his current position as city manager.

The Michigan Local Government Management Association is the professional association of local government managers in Michigan. Its approximately 400 members are active city, village, township and county administrators.

### **UNDERSTANDING ROAD FUNDING**

A few weeks ago I included a short piece on road funding in the Digest. I had received a question from a township trustee on road funding and consulted Brett Laughlin, Executive Director of the Road Commission, Ottawa Corporation Counsel Greg Rappleye, and Mark Scheerhorn, retired Administrative Services Director before drafting the article. A township supervisor was concerned about how I had used the word "responsibility" and as I thought about it I realized that the word had a different connotation for me with prior city manager experience than it does for him today. I forwarded his concern to Brett Laughlin and Brett quickly put together a team to draft a document that provides greater clarity for the issue and this document, Understanding Road Funding, is included with the Digest (click here). I think this is a perfect application of the Digest and Casting for Comments, the blog that I publish. By interacting on issues of impact we are able to provide better clarification and understanding.

### **GOVERNOR SNYDER'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET**

We are still analyzing the Governors recommended budget. There are several areas of impact for the County not the least of which is including county governments in the EVIP. The recommended budget as forwarded by County lobbyist GCSI can be found by following this link <http://www.gcsionline.com/2013-executive-budget-recommendation.html>.

### **U of M LOCAL OFFICIAL EVIP SURVEY RESULTS**

We received the following report this week and thought readers would be interested.

To: Michigan's county officials

From: University of Michigan's Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy

Subject: Local officials react to state policy change tying local government revenue sharing to dashboards and

incentive funding

Date: January 25, 2012

Below is a link to a new report from the University of Michigan's Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) which presents the initial responses of Michigan local government leaders like you to the the state's new Economic Vitality Incentive Program (EVIP).

The EVIP requires certain eligible local governments to certify that they have met state-specified standards for "best practices" in three categories in order to receive state funds. This report focuses on the first EVIP category (accountability and transparency) and examines how Michigan's local governments are responding to the state's incentive-driven push for local reform, according to responses to the Fall 2011 Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS).

The findings are summarized below, and the full report is available on the CLOSUP homepage: <http://closup.umich.edu>.

You can read or download the report from the website, or if you contact us here at CLOSUP (closup-mpps@umich.edu) we would be happy to email you a .pdf version. Meanwhile, key highlights from the report are listed below.

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Understanding of Michigan's EVIP policy innovation is uneven among local leaders across the state. While officials from large jurisdictions are quite familiar with the EVIP program, nearly a quarter (24%) of officials from the smallest EVIP-eligible jurisdictions say they know very little, if anything, about the incentive program.

Local governments that are eligible for EVIP funding appear to be responding to the EVIP incentives by creating dashboards and citizens guides, but few other jurisdictions are following suit at this early stage. Overall, 90% of EVIP-eligible jurisdictions say they have created a performance dashboard or will do so in the next 12 months. By comparison, only 26% of jurisdictions that are ineligible for EVIP funding have created a dashboard, or plan to do so within the next year.

Statewide, most Michigan local leaders question the efficacy of performance dashboards. Only a small minority of local officials in Michigan (8%) believe that adoption of "dashboard" reports will be very effective in improving the overall performance of their governments. Only 10% of all local leaders think a dashboard would be very effective at improving their jurisdiction's accountability and transparency.

Local officials expressed a number of common concerns about dashboards, including that they sometimes measure factors beyond the control of local government, and that measures can be ambiguous, resulting in flawed understanding and inappropriate comparisons between jurisdictions.

More detailed information is available in the report itself.

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Additional findings from the Fall 2011 wave of the MPPS-- including findings about the use of data and performance management among Michigan's local jurisdictions-- will be covered in upcoming reports.

In the meantime, the CLOSUP website now provides detailed tables of the data collected in all of the previous MPPS surveys, with the Fall 2011 data to be posted soon. These easy-to-read tables can be found at: <http://closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/mpps-data-tables.php>

The data tables breakdown survey responses three ways: by jurisdiction type (county, city, township or village); by population size of the respondent's community; and by the region of the respondent's jurisdiction. These tables allow very quick analysis for a wide range of data.

We are happy to answer any questions you may have, and to help you interpret the data. Our goal is to help inform the policymaking process in Michigan at all levels, and we hope these data tables will help serve that purpose.

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The MPPS is conducted by CLOSUP in partnership with the Michigan Association of Counties, Michigan Municipal League, and Michigan Townships Association. The survey program is unique in the country as the only ongoing survey targeted at every unit of general purpose local government across an entire state.

For more information, contact MPPS staff by email at [closup-mpps@umich.edu](mailto:closup-mpps@umich.edu) or by phone at 734-647-4091. More information is also available on the CLOSUP website at: <http://closup.umich.edu>.

### **LAKESHORE COORDINATING COUNCIL**

The Lakeshore Coordinating Council (LCC) recently made a change at the Executive Director level. Kori White-Bissot has been named Interim Executive Director. Berrien County is considering leaving the four county coalition and the article from the Herald-Palladium newspaper detailing this can be found by clicking on the link [http://m.herald-palladium.com/articles/2012/02/10/local\\_news/8552966.txt](http://m.herald-palladium.com/articles/2012/02/10/local_news/8552966.txt)

### **OUT AND ABOUT**

I had the pleasure of attending a community education conversation at the Grand Haven Community Center. Spring Lake Township Supervisor John Nash hosted the meeting and the Center for Michigan facilitated the meeting. Sheriff Rosema and Mark Knudsen also participated.

Earlier this week I participated in a youth forum hosted by Mayor Kurt Dykstra in Holland and I participated on the social media group with a few other adults and a number of students from area high schools. It was a great time and I learned a thing or two about social media.

# Understanding Road Funding

## for Ottawa County

### Road Commission and Township Collaboration

2012

#### Authority and Obligation over County Roads

##### History of the County Road

In the early 1900's, the Township Board of Supervisors had authority over the construction and maintenance of public roads.

The **McNitt Act of 1931**, supplemented by **Public Act 51 of 1951**, removed the Township authority and obligation and required the Road Commission to maintain all public roads outside of

incorporated cities and villages.

At that time, the Road Commission was required to classify the roads as either county primary or county local.

Today, the Ottawa County Road Commission maintains 1,679 miles of county roads.

#### County Road Mileage Breakdown

Primary = 425 miles

Local = 1,254 miles

Total = 1,679 miles

#### County Road Funding

##### Ottawa County Road Commission Funds

There seems to be a common misunderstanding that the Road Commission receives funding from property taxes.

The fact of the matter is, other than funds that are authorized and paid by a Township for a specific project or service, the Road Commission does not

directly receive any property tax revenues.

Instead, revenues are distributed to the Road Commission through the **Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF)** to maintain the primary and local road systems.

#### Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF)

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The MTF is comprised of the collection of fuel taxes, vehicle registration fees, and vehicle weight taxes. The Road Commission anticipates the following MTF disbursements in 2012:

Primary Road = \$10,900,000  
Local Road = \$ 4,900,000  
**Total Funds = \$15,800,000**

#### Road Commission Budget

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The Road Commission is required to utilize the MTF disbursements as received to maintain the primary and local road systems. The 2012 Road Commission budget reflects the MTF allocations.

#### Primary Road Budget

Maintenance  
Summer = \$2,700,000  
Winter = \$1,200,000  
Improvements = \$7,000,000

#### Local Road Budget

Maintenance  
Summer = \$3,600,000  
Winter = \$1,400,000  
Improvements = -(\$100,000)

## **Funding Shortfall**

### *Local Roads*

#### **Public Act 51 of 1951**

requires the Road Commission to only spend the MTF funds based on the allocated amounts for primary and local roads.

Recent amendments to Public Act 51 of 1951 have allowed the Road Commission to transfer up to 15% of the MTF funds between primary and local roads to balance the yearly activities.

However, since the total local road mileage makes up 75% of the county road system, and only 31% of the total MTF funding can be utilized on local roads, it is clear that there is a shortfall for local road funding.

## **Collaboration**

### *Support History*

Prior to 1986, the federal General Revenue Sharing program provided funding for Ottawa County to use for any purpose. In the late 1970's and early 1980's as part of the program, the County would provide an initial amount of funds for each Township to be utilized on local roads. The Road Commission would match the County portion, with the balance being the responsibility of the Township and/or residents.

Since the termination of the revenue sharing program, the Townships have been relied upon to assist in funding local road resurfacing and improvement projects.

## **Subdivision Improvements**

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Since the start of the subdivision resurfacing and improvement program in 1987, 100% of the costs associated with the program have been paid by the Townships and/or residents.

## **Local Road Improvements**

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Within the limits of the MTF funding allocation, the Road Commission provides a resurfacing and seal coat program for local paved roads.

However, the costs for local road construction projects have been paid 100% by the Townships and/or residents.

# **Township Options for Road Funding**

## **Township General Fund**

A Township Board can appropriate any available balances in its general fund for maintenance and/or improvements to a county road within the Township. If funds are available, they are typically allocated during the yearly budgetary process. The use of these funds is strictly at the discretion of the Township Board.

## **Special Assessment**

**Public Act 188 of 1954** authorizes a Township Board to make improvements to a county road through special assessments against benefited property owners either through the receipt of a valid petition or through a Township Board resolution or motion.

## **Township Millage**

The Township Board can implement a millage for road improvements with a vote of the electors.