

**APPROVED
PROCEEDINGS OF THE OTTAWA COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FEBRUARY SESSION – FIRST DAY**

The Ottawa County Board of Commissioners met on Thursday, February 14, 2008, at 1:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Chair.

Mr. Schrotenboer pronounced the invocation.

The Clerk led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Present at roll call: Messrs. Kuyers, Swartout, Hehl, Rycenga, Schrotenboer, Disselkoen, Berghorst, Holtrop. (8)

Absent: Mrs. Kortman, Mrs. Ruiter, Mr. Holtvluwer. (3)

Public Comments and Communications from County Staff

A. 2008 State of the County Address by County Administrator Alan G. Vanderberg.



STATE OF OTTAWA COUNTY 2008

PRESENTED BY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR ALAN G. VANDERBERG TO THE OTTAWA
COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FEBRUARY 14, 2008

Chair Disselkoen, Vice-Chair Kuyers, and members of the Board, I thank you for the opportunity to present this 4th annual State of the County address. I believe it is important to take time each year to reflect upon the accomplishments of the past year and focus on the months ahead.

Much of 2007 was spent completing objectives identified in the 2006-2007 strategic plan, and as such, I will once again organize the State of the County to correspond to the strategic plan's framework. I continue to be amazed at how many people have viewed the strategic plan on miOttawa.org and printed it out for reference. We strive to make the plan a living, breathing document and daily guide to our actions, and I believe we are close to achieving that goal in 2008.

Ottawa County is committed to excellence and the delivery of cost-effective public services. There is no more concise way than our mission statement to tell our residents, employees, and customers what Ottawa County is all about. Every day our employees work to find creative ways to deliver outstanding service within limited resources, which is why the first of our four goals, to **MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THE STRONG FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNTY**, is so critical to what we do. Residents trust Ottawa County

government to use tax dollars wisely, and with Michigan's economic climate, prudence and foresight have become even more important to our organization.

In 2007 we maintained our high credit ratings with all three major rating agencies and continued the third-year implementation of the 5-year general fund annual operating deficit elimination plan. In spite of having to address OPEB costs earlier than anticipated in the 2008 budget, the deficit was reduced to \$864,000 from the almost \$3 million deficit that existed in the 2005 budget when the elimination plan began. If the deficit reduction plan had not been implemented by the Board of Commissioners, the 2008 deficit was estimated to be \$4 million.

The State budget shutdown in late 2007 and the grant moratorium earlier in the year were reminders of the continued need to educate the public and State officials of the intended interdependence of the levels of government. State funds for mandated services are critical to the County's ability to carry out those mandates, and it is those at the local level who suffer when such funds are reduced or eliminated. In 2008 we will continue our efforts, working with GCSI and MAC, to advocate for full funding for State mandates, reminding the State that the Constitution requires it to partner with counties to deliver services.

The battle to restore revenue sharing to counties is another issue which must be addressed at the State level in 2008. Partial funding was provided for Tuscola County in the 2008 State budget, but 2009 is the first fiscal year for which full funding must be provided. In addition to Tuscola County's full appropriation, 5 other counties are scheduled to receive partial funding, and the Governor included the full \$2.4 million request in her 2009 budget proposal. We will work with the Legislature to ensure that the entire amount is included in the final 2009 budget. Ottawa rejoins the State revenue sharing funding cycle in 2010 or 2011, depending on interest revenue, making it important to ensure the State lives up to its statutory commitment during the upcoming budget cycles.

Our ongoing effort to identify all mandated and discretionary services will be improved in 2008 with the addition of our documentation of service levels for all mandated services. The Board has now reviewed and ranked discretionary services, but it is also important to identify the level at which we provide mandated services and compare it to what we are required to provide. When that work is completed in spring of 2008, the Board will have a unique tool which can be used to further refine decisions about service provision.

Many factors outside of our control will impact the short- and long-term financial outlook for the County. Michigan's economic climate, the soft housing market, and the foreclosure and sub-prime mortgage crisis all impact County revenues, and to that end, in 2008 we will refine our forecasting tools to ensure the County is prepared to face future challenges. Current forecasts show that if our spending and revenue continue at existing levels, we could again see \$4.5 million deficits at the end of the next five years.

Our second goal is to **MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION WITH CITIZENS, EMPLOYEES, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS.** Building upon recent efforts like the press conferences held on State funding decisions, the annual report to citizens, and additional content on miOttawa.org, we will continue to improve communication initiatives. The website continues to increase in its importance to residents and county departments; after

two full years in operation, the site averages over 85,000 visits per month, up 270% from an average of 23,000 visits per month in 2005. Forty percent of accident reports and 80% of delinquent tax searches are conducted online, and performance is up in every online application. In 2007, Parks Reservations, District Court payments were added to miOttawa, and the site was graphically updated to improve ease of use. New services that will be available in 2008 include environmental health permits, court record lookup, marriage and death record order, an online employment application, and improved access to Register of Deeds documents.

The 2007 employee survey indicated a marked improvement in communication with employees and more confidence in County administration. Results were up in all areas from the 2005 survey, and to maintain and improve those results we will continue efforts such as brown bag lunches, the employee newsletter, and messages from Human Resources. An exciting initiative that will be launched in 2008, the GOLD Standard Training Program, is a direct response to the 2005 and 2007 survey results. You will hear more about this program from Laura Mousseau later today, but I believe that the systematic overhaul of our employee training system will allow us to communicate better at all levels of the organization.

The third goal established in the strategic plan is to **CONTRIBUTE TO A HEALTHY PHYSICAL, ECONOMIC, AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT**. The ongoing construction projects in Grand Haven and at Fillmore are already changing the face of Ottawa County. Both projects are progressing nicely, and the Fillmore project will be completed in September 2008, with Grand Haven continuing into fall of 2009. We look forward to serving residents from the expanded Fillmore location in late 2008.

Building upon two successful water quality forums, the Planning Commission's proposed groundwater inventory, and the implementation of the phosphorus ordinance, Ottawa County will strive to be a leader on water quality issues in 2008. We will work with our partners to expand the water quality forum to a full day event and coordinate groups working on water-related issues to prevent duplication of activities. The Planning Commission will work with local units of government and other stakeholders to complete the countywide groundwater inventory, and we will continue to offer Ottawa County as a research site to leading Great Lakes scientists. Water quality is critical to high-quality recreational opportunities and quality-of-life in Ottawa County, and we will do all that we can to protect it. The Great Lakes Water Compact that would protect water from diversion outside of the Great Lakes Basin deserves our enthusiastic support.

The County Parks Department made several significant acquisitions in 2007, using funds from the Parks millage to purchase or option properties along the Grand River, Macatawa watershed, and Lake Michigan. Our Parks are among the finest in the Midwest, and in 2008 the Department will begin work on a LEED-certified nature center at Hemlock Crossing, which will allow for expanded educational offerings in one of the Parks system's most beautiful properties.

Development continues on the countywide wireless system, and the Planning Department has worked tirelessly through company mergers and technology changes to move the system forward. A major announcement regarding the system will be made next week, and having broadband capability throughout the county will be an important asset for residents, businesses, and economic development.

Participation in regional projects such as the Lower Grand River Watershed Organization, WIRED, and the West Michigan Strategic Alliance's Green Infrastructure Initiative will improve the overall community and competitive environment in Ottawa County, and we will seek other opportunities to contribute on a regional level.

The final goal established by the Board of Commissioners is to **CONTINUALLY IMPROVE THE COUNTY'S ORGANIZATION AND SERVICES**. I am especially proud of the work we have completed in this area in the last year. In 2007, we reported first-year savings of \$63,737 from the Equalization Department reorganization, \$70,234 from the reorganization of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Relief Commission into the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and just over \$20,000 from the reorganization of the Administrative Services Department. The Parenting Plus evaluation and reorganization adopted in 2007 will save over \$450,000 in 2008. Organizational improvements will not always result in such significant savings, but we will seek cost reductions and efficiency wherever possible. In 2008 we will present reports and recommendations on the provision of substance abuse services, public utilities, and the potential combination of the Clerk and Register of Deeds offices.

These reports will be in addition to the ongoing evaluations conducted by the Planning Department, which for 2008 include the Land Use and Economic Development study, the Juvenile, District Court, and Circuit Court Drug Courts; the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy program; and the initial time-study analysis of the Justice Imaging project. The Justice Imaging system will be fully-implemented this year, and once the system is operational for all justice departments, we will evaluate the possibility of extending imaging to other County departments where it would increase efficiency and improve processes.

With the hiring of Director Marie Waalkes in 2007, major changes have begun in Human Resources. Not only does this address issues identified in the employee survey by current employees, but improved service in HR allows Ottawa County to attract the best available talent when hiring new employees. 2008 will see the first major wage and classification study not conducted by William Rye & Associates in over a decade, and virtually all classifications are a part of this year's study. The proposed system will allow for ongoing administration internally, saving money over time by eliminating large jumps in salary costs that have historically occurred each time a study is completed. All labor contracts expire at the end of 2008, so we will begin working with union representatives toward the middle of the year to ensure that contracts are settled amicably and on-time.

The Labor-Management Cooperation Committee has already begun making recommendations for communication and enhancements to the health plan, but its work will increase in 2008 with the detailed development of a wellness and health management plan for implementation in 2009, with a mission of continually improving workplace health through a cooperative partnership.

When I look at the work needed to achieve all of our goals, I see a need for greater engagement on the State level. Many programs, services, and initiatives of the County are impacted by State funding levels or by mandates. The Michigan Legislature and Governor experienced one of the most bitter and acrimonious years in State history in 2007. County officials spent the year in continually reacting as valuable programs and

services were regularly placed on the chopping block. This has led the Governor to call for a new era of cooperation and decision-makers in Lansing seem ready to embark on a new honeymoon period. We also have important issues at the federal level that have gone unresolved in a year's time. The chaos of last year has emphasized the importance of County officials developing and communicating a clear and concise legislative agenda for our Representatives and Senators in Lansing and Washington.

We have much to accomplish in 2008, and I very much look forward to working with the Board of Commissioners, employees, and other County stakeholders to continually improve our operations and quality of services to residents.

B/C 08-027 Mr. Schrotenboer moved to approve the agenda of today as presented.
The motion passed.

B/C 08-028 Mr. Kuyers moved to approve the following Consent Resolutions:

1. To approve the Minutes of the January 22, 2008, Board of Commissioners Meeting.
2. To authorize the payroll of February 14, 2008, in the amount of \$416.45.
3. To receive as information Correspondence Log 378.
4. To approve the general claims in the amount of \$4,119,059.13 as presented by the summary report for January 14, 2008 through January 31, 2008.
5. To receive for information the County of Ottawa Register of Deeds' 2007 Annual Report.
6. To receive for information the County of Ottawa Equalization Department's 2007 Annual Report.

The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Messrs. Hehl, Berghorst, Swartout, Rycenga, Holtrop, Kuyers, Schrotenboer, Disselkoen. (8)

B/C 08-029 Mr. Rycenga moved to adopt the following proposed policies:

Acceptable Use (IT Policy No. 01)
Electronic Mail & Privacy (IT Policy No. 02 (Former HR Policy No. 27))
IM & P2P File Sharing (IT Policy No. 03 (Former HR Policy No. 29))
Internet Use (IT Policy No. 04 (Former HR Policy No. 28))
Portable Devices (IT Policy No. 05)
Remote Access & ASP (IT Policy No. 06)
Wireless Access (IT Policy No. 07)

The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Messrs. Hehl, Rycenga, Schrotenboer, Kuyers, Holtrop, Swartout, Berghorst, Disselkoen. (8)

B/C 08-030 Mr. Swartout moved to approve the Resolution authorizing the Ottawa County Road Commission to issue Act 342 Bonds in the amount of \$985,000 to finance the Grand Haven Charter Township 2008 Wastewater System Improvements. The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Messrs. Swartout, Holtrop, Berghorst, Kuyers, Schrotenboer, Rycenga, Hehl, Disselkoen. (8)

Discussion Items

1. Administrator's Evaluation – The Chair commended the Administrator on his evaluation which was ranked “far exceed position requirements”.
2. County of Ottawa Register of Deeds' 2007 Annual Report – Gary Scholten, Register of Deeds, presented the 2007 Register of Deeds' Annual Report.
3. County of Ottawa Equalization Department's 2007 Annual Report – Michael Galligan, Equalization Director, presented the 2007 Equalization Department's Annual Report.

The Administrator's report was presented.

B/C 08-031 Mr. Berghorst moved to adjourn at 2:15 p.m. subject to the call of the Chair. The motion passed.

DANIEL C. KRUEGER, Clerk
Of the Board of Commissioners

DONALD DISSELKOEN, Chairman
Of the Board of Commissioners

