

Cass Co GOP Executive meeting 5-28-2024

Mark Howie called to order 7:00 PM, Riley Kass led in prayer and Jeremiah Jones the Pledge.

Roll Call: The following were present: Steve Carra, Brad Paquette, Johnathan Lindsey, Hope Anderson, Monica McMichael, Rick Behnke, Victor Fitz, Jeff VanBelle, James Lawrence, Jeremiah Jones, Mary Howie, Rosann Marchetti, RJ Lee, Wally Berndt, Dan Adams, Kim Adams, Jerry Duck, Nate Wilder, Mark Howie, JD Glaser, Wendy Glaser, Rose Kelsheimer, Roger Boyer, Mike Grice, Lynn Schantz, Brian Woodburry and Debbie Burke.

Not present: Thomas Stephenson, Ryan Laylin, Joyce Sheteron-Locke, Samuel Barrera, Mike Egan and Kevin Kelsheimer.

Excused Absence: Tom Langley.

Approval of the Agenda: RJ Lee moved to approve the agenda seconded by Mary Howie. The motion passed.

Secretaries Report: Wally Berndt – Roseann Marchetti motioned to approve seconded by RJ Lee. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Kim Adams – Copies are on the table in the back. In the campaign account the balance is \$25,268.36. The admin account balance is \$164.78.

Presentation: Stacey Wilder – Victims advocate program: This has been mentioned in the last few meetings here. I am thankful for Sherriff Behnke who has help start this. I had been a Chaplin for about 15 years ago. We get called out to different scenes at any time of the day throughout the week. We are adding an advocate's program, someone who can help alongside the Chaplin and help during the call. There are resources available. Cass County has stepped up, invested, and is offering training in crises intervention. Victim services provide comfort and direction to help families cope with loss in time of need. This unit is made up of caring and compassionate volunteers.

Committee Updates:

Special Events: Mary Howie – Thank you to all that helped with the Lincoln Day dinner. We made money with the Silent Auction, more than we did last year. Thank you to Lisa Smith who did the silent auction. My granddaughter Nola who is still in High School and her father Eric came and helped. It meant a lot for her to be here. Her brother Owen who passed away was very involved with Ontwa Township.

The next event coming up is the Cass County Fair from July 28th thru August 3rd. To all the candidates, bring signs and literature and sign up for booth duty. Register ahead of time to be in the opening parade.

Issues Committee: Wally Berndt – Will Beadenkopf made some bookmarks that say when the 2 monthly meeting are. It does not define the difference between the meetings but lets you know you are welcome to either. We are adding to the Jan 6th Fact Sheet.

Membership Recruiting: Kay Keenum – We are looking into membership and registering people to vote during the fair. I am also working on the voter rolls with a lot of support and we are making some headways on that.

Delegate Committee: Roger Boyer – On May 7th we met and finished up work with the delegate recruitment plan. We might have as many as 18 new delegates. The sign program is moving along and we have commitments for 5 and possibly 6 locations. Each sign will cost about \$377 with the labor being free. Linette Fay Daughterty will pay for her sign.

I make a motion for \$1,000 to pay for the additional signs. Dan Adams seconded the motion. The motion carries.

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Sherriff: Rick Behnke – We are having a problem in dispatch having two employees resign. One for more money and the other to be with her child. Two are on medical leave. We are 4 down in a 12-person rotation. We have 2 openings we are looking to fill.

Prosecutor: Victor Fitz - We had a drug bust last Tuesday night. A meth dealer who was initially busted in Elkhart with a half-pound of meth on his person (\$11,000) We did a search warrant in Mason Township that revealed a pound and a quarter of meth along with guns and cash. A pound of meth is easily worth over \$20,000 wholesale with a street value of upwards around \$100,000.

There is a need for our drug team here in Cass County. There has been a huge transition. It use to be that people would get the chemicals and make meth here in Cass County. We were #4 in the state for meth production. That has disappeared because the Chinese are supplying fentanyl to Mexico and now the drugs come up through the cartels.

Thank you for the support. We really need it.

Treasurer: Hope Anderson – I am the custodian for all the monies of the county. Most people know me for being the delinquent tax collector. Since I became Treasurer in 2018, there has been significant changes in the Michigan Property Tax Act. In 2014 Oakland County Michigan foreclosed on a home over an \$8.41 tax debt. The county ended up selling that property for \$24,500 keeping the proceeds. This was proper under the Michigan Property Tax Act. The lower court held that the application of that statute was valid, but the Michigan Supreme Court reversed it with a unanimous decision.

In 2021 the General Property Tax Act was modified in response to that decision. The most consequential change in the amendment comes with the addition of MCL 2117018 that establishes a process where former interest owners can claim remaining proceeds from a Tax foreclosure sale. Since that change, now every single former owner of a property that foreclosed can claim their interest. In December of 2022, the Cass County Board of Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution to enter a long-awaited settlement for tax reverted properties that foreclosed prior to 2021. I expect disbursements will happen sometime later this year.

My office continues to keep the number of foreclosures down. Down by 50% since 2019. The achievement is accomplished by going over and above the statutory requirements first notice. I do a lot of home owner plan extensions. I do door to door visits accompanied by a Sherriff's deputy every year. I provide a list of community resources available to those in need. I also help those individuals apply who most of the time have no access to a computer. We also do social media and traditional media outreaches to the community to get out the message that we want to keep homeowners in their homes.

This year I had eleven properties where the owner no longer wanted the property. They said they wanted it to be foreclosed. All were vacant land. Reasons included, the property could not be built on, another case there was no clear title, a family could not agree on anything after the owner died. All the owners can claim the interest in those proceeds.

Right now there are 492 properties with delinquent 2022 taxes.

County Clerk: Monica McMichael – I am also the Registrar of Deeds and with that mortgage foreclosures are skyrocketing again. We are also seeing individuals and companies that are swooping in and purchasing before the Bank can purchase these properties and homes. We see them even before they go to auction knocking on doors offering them a thousand if they sign the property over. On gentleman in his 90's was moved out of his home and put him up elsewhere. We worked hard to locate him and now there is an investigation going on. There are some bad actors out there. I don't know how these people can sleep. Please check on your love ones and make sure they okay and not being taken advantage of.

Absentee Ballots for August are going out soon available by June 22 or before. We will have early voting July 27th thru Aug 4th which is at an astronomically high cost. Every 4 years we submit for reimbursement from the state. The last time we requested about \$14,000 to cover the county cost. With early voting and the extra cost this time around it will be \$83,000.

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I started an "I voted" sticker contest for Cass County. High Schools were able to submit had drawn of digital art for these stickers.

Drain Commissioner: Jeff VanBelle – We are currently working on storm damage. Most of the damage occurred at Twin Lakes. Insurance does not cover tree damage and the locals do not have the resources to deal with this. Our treasurer invested for 118 drain plumbs and 19 legal levels. Under her direction the drain office fund balance is in the best shape in a long time.

8th District: RJ Lee – The county gave \$25,000 to assist in helping with clean-up. MDOT was also responsive. The state may assist a couple months down the road.

7th District: Roseann Marchetti – Jeremiah Jones, Joyce Sheteron-Locke, Samuel Barrera and I attended the table top emergency management meeting. It was timely and covered a lot. It was an excellent event.

5th District: Mary Howie – I attended a meeting last Tuesday at Sam Adams middle school in regards to the building of the new community center. A ten-page survey was passed out asking what kind of schools we liked, what foods, lodging, would you like a spa there, library, what kind of shops? All these questions made me think of a 15-minute city and all the things that would go along with it. The thing I heard at the end of this meeting was that they want to change the culture of Cassopolis. I am not in favor of that at all. The Economic Development --Company and MEC wire very involved in this.

4th District: Jeremiah Jones – I would like to thank the Sherriff and his deputies for the work at Twin Lakes from the tornado damage. Ryan Laylin and I were there for a couple days and showed Congressman Walberg around. Our road commission director Bob Thompson was key because he has relationships with all the communities and all the road commissions in the state.

2nd District: James Lawrence – For the Ambulance service, we are in the process now of trying to get something set-up for a 24-hour service. I only hope that it happens soon. I would like to thank those in the advocate program with the Sherriff and Pastors.

State Senator: Johnathan Lyndsey – All eyes are on the budget now. This week in the middle of the budget process, the legislature mostly shuts down so key leaders can go to Mackinac Island for a conference. A lot of decisions are made. The process is all smoke and mirrors. It is broken and we need to reform it. I expect we will see the conference committee reports no more than a couple hours before we vote on excepting those reports. Each will be probably a couple thousand pages long.

State Representative: Brad Paquette – We have a meeting with facebook. Some people here want to join in that. They wanted to do the first meeting with just me and then the next meeting will be the next week. Wanting answers on censorship, certain topics and how they run their algorithms. Other things I've been working on; on the local government committee 2 weeks ago. They want to pass legislation put automated cameras to catch cars speeding by. I adamantly oppose because they are unmanned and it is a way to generate revenue. I asked them how many kids are getting hit in front of schools but they had no data to support the bill. In this state a much greater need is to protect children from abuse. If you google it, you will see abuse in Michigan is very prolific.

Figuring out ways to stop bad legislation has been a challenge but it is also invigorating at times. In Lame Duck there is going to be very many bad bills. It is going to be rough.

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People don't believe this is happening in the state of Michigan. Every single one of our children's hospitals are doing this, issuing these drugs, blocking kids puberty, scheduling gender surgeries, because the AMA, the American Society of Pediatric and all of these groups are into this hook line and sinker.

State Representative: Steve Carra – In regards to the Smart Park when they are privy to special deals, tax abatement, money from MEC and other special privileges that are not free markets, we call that “Central Planning.” I don't support Central planning and I do not believe anyone here does either. They pick which companies are going to get this special treatment and they are also going to get money from the state of Michigan. They will a part of the arm twisting at Mackinac Island.

There is an event coming up June 28th a prayer line visual. It will be the day before Three Rivers Pride where they want sexual perversion and efforts are being made to sexually manipulate our children.

5th Congressional District: JD Glaser – The meeting with the Electric Company. They admitted we would have brown-outs. The lady who was hosting the meeting said “I can't wait till this is over” can we reschedule this in 6 months? She could not wait to get out of there. Two years ago, Jerry Duck brought up that a notice was sent out notice saying to expect brown outs for the first time. There is not planning for us to have enough energy in the near future.

Regarding District 5, a motion passed to write a letter to the state committee to instigate formal proceedings for people on the Hillsdale County party that have broken the Republican Party by-laws. We must do some housekeeping.

Unanimous consensus by the district committee to hold a fundraiser for the electors and matt DePerno who had been indited. They are having criminal court this week running about \$450 an hour for seven days. The electors must come up with that money and need help. This should be on the Republican Party. I will be as district chair be calling on volunteers to set-up a fundraiser.

Team Trump is footing the bill for the state party to access Sidekick. We will have access and training.

Michigan Supreme Court: Caleb for Andrew Fink – A Hillsdale graduate, University of Michigan Law school, Marine Corps Veteran, Experienced Attorney and Legislator. As the son of a Police Officer and grandson of a Judge, Andrew is committed to continuing a legacy of service, holding the Constitution as a guiding light.

Candidates:

Jeremiah Jones – Four years ago I was the first Black to win Pokagan as a Republican.

Lynn Schantz – Running against Jeremy. We are praying for each other.

Scott Peters – Trustee

Mike Bibsbobr – Supervisor

Frank Perez – I want to make this a better place. for District 36 State Rep.

Steve Carra –

Victor Fitz – Give the people Justice, give the criminal Fitz.

James Lawrence – Commissioner for the 2nd district.

Jerry Duck made a motion to adjourn seconded by Nate Wilder.

The motion passed unanimously. The meeting is Adjourned

Respectfully submitted by Wally Berndt.