



Administrator/Controller Report November 2013

Strategic Goals

1. Maintain financial strength and stability
2. Strengthen and expand the County's use of technology
3. Address infrastructure needs
4. Continue community engagement and access to information
5. Ensure that County is viewed as a fair and equitable employer
6. Expand the capabilities of the Board of Commissioners
7. Advance the health and quality of life of the region
8. Protect and preserve County's water resources, forests, natural areas and scenic beauty

Boardman River Dams (8)

The Implementation has recommended that the County Administrator/Controller sign the Funds Administration agreement with the Conservation Resource Alliance (CRA), and the CRA will begin processing claims as they arrive. The IT also recommended that the County sign the agreement with URS to design and implement the replacement of the Cass Road Bridge and the restoration of the river to its original location.

Administration Office (1-8)

➤ **Web Site:**

Web Training A sixth training session was held for editors of the County web site on October 16. The training was conducted by Cyndie Forster of Commission on Aging who taught employees about creating buttons and Kim Elliott of Resource Recovery who demonstrated adding videos to the County web site. 15 employees representing 13 departments attended. One more web training session is anticipated on changing photos on the site.

Department Review Schedule Departments are scheduled through the end of the year with five departments scheduled into 2014. Follow up has been conducted with departments who have not attended regularly and assistance has been offered to encourage attendance.

➤ **Technology:**

Information Desk Services and Contacts

Met with IT October 1 to review a new internal application they have created to replace our existing contact database - that is still in Lotus Notes - used to provide the Information Desk volunteers with helpful information in answering questions and providing direction. This is an online searchable database and is able to be

exported to hard copy for the non-computer users at the Information Desk. Reviewed the application and made suggested changes on October 17 for further updates. The application was installed on the Information Desk computer and provided by hard copy to them for review and comment on October 25. This resource will be made available to all employees/departments in the future.

Commission on Aging (7)

➤ **BOARD RULES**

The Commission on Aging unanimously recommended the County Board accept the Commission on Aging Board Rules and Regulations as revised. No additional changes were made.

➤ **TRANSPORTATION FUNDING**

The Commission on Aging approved transferring funds from lesser-used services (heating assistance and hardship fund) to the transportation program. This service has been widely used and positively received. It was started with an anonymous donation which lasted for over two years. BATA passes (\$30 pass) and coupons (\$40 per packet) are sold on a sliding fee scale starting at \$3. A list of local transportation service providers agreeing to accept payment from the GTCOA are distributed with the coupons. Coupons can be used for taxis, home health transportation (to include an aide if needed), and other private transportation providers. All funds go to local vendors. Staff continues to look for other funding for this program.

➤ **BOARD TECHNOLOGY**

All Commission on Aging board members now have tablets; we will officially go paperless November 1, 2013.

➤ **CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS**

The Commission on Aging is investigating both credit card and e-check payments. A recommendation to move forward has passed through our Finance committee and will go to the full board November 5, 2013. Several County departments are already using these forms of payments (Treasurer, Health Department). This will give our customers two additional payment options.

Construction Code (7)

- Building activity still remains very strong. Building permits up 21% over 2012.
- Soil Erosion permits are up 32% over 2012.
- Expect to see construction activity remain strong for the remainder of the year and into the spring of 2014.

Equalization (1,4)

- Several townships and the city are discussing the possibility of obtaining oblique imagery, and appear committed to a flyover next spring. This would require a decision by December to have contracts in place. There is a group effort underway to see how a multiple unit bid may promote a cost savings. Oblique imagery information packets will be presented to the East Bay Board in November.

- Equalization staff participated in Damage Assessment Training at the Emergency Operating Center. It is an essential part of Emergency Management that has been all but nonexistent in the recent past. Local assessors were solicited for participation at last month's assessor meeting. Long Lake Township's assessor is participating.
- The Personal Property Auditor was successful in obtaining a Personal Property Examiner Certification, from the State Tax Commission, at an October class held in Traverse City at the Great Wolf Lodge. He is actively reviewing personal property accounts of the various local entities.
- The newest appraiser in Equalization has completed 18 months of training through the State Tax Commission, and has received a passing score for her Michigan Certified Assessing Officer (MCAO) designation. This will be made official at a November meeting of the State Tax Commission.
- Equalization studies of value are nearing completion. There are currently no specific determinations, and overall projected assessment levels are varied. Some indications projecting the rate of inflation, used in the calculation of taxable value, are at 1.6% with two months of measurement left.
- Appraisers handling the East Bay Township assessing contract have reported that there are 49 new housing starts in the township. There are also three new commercial buildings to be considered for the 2014 assessment roll. This is over double compared to new housing starts last year, with one commercial building built for the 2013 assessment roll.

Facilities (3)

- **Civic Center (3)** - Installation of a new air make-up unit, providing heating services for the lobby, restrooms, and a portion of the ladies pool locker room, will be completed in early November. This priority replacement was due to the failure of a unit originally installed in 1989.
- **Jail (3)** - Continue to upgrade the interior locking system for doors and cells within the Jail. This project includes replacing worn parts, ensuring all lock operations, and confirming the master key system.
- **Governmental Center (4/7/8)** - Outside lighting fixtures, particularly those in the parking areas, have been adjusted to decrease light pollution. Each has been leveled, allowing the light beam to illuminate only the area below the fixture.

Health Department & Emergency Management (7)

➤ ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE DIVISION

- Medicaid Outreach and Health Care Exchange Enrollment – Health Department has had little demand from the public in getting signed up for insurance. We continue our day-to-day enrollment assistance with Medicaid through the WIC program and will be gearing up to assist existing clients with the Medicaid Expansion next spring.

- Outreach Events and Media Coverage - Presented to Kings Court Mobile Community Dinner (800 residents) on services provided at the health department; we continue promotion of flu clinics via all media options.
- The Health Officer, Wendy Trute, was a keynote presenter at the Michigan Premier Public Health Conference in Bay City. She presented the local health department perspective on responding to the multi-state contaminated steroid shot outbreak that resulted in local fungal infections and meningitis cases in our community.

➤ **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & PREPAREDNESS DIVISION**

- Sixteen (16) County personnel from Emergency Management, Equalization, Local Assessors, GIS, County Roads, Metro Emergency Services, and TC Fire completed the first part of formal Damage Assessment training on October 23. Grand Traverse County will be better equipped to conduct assessments of damaged infrastructure and properties in the event of a disaster. Training will continue as we move forward to train approximately 30-40 total personnel for our teams.
- The annual National Weather Service Winter Weather Talk was held October 21 in the Health Department Training Room. Twenty (20) local residents attended the program and learned what we might expect weather-wise in our region this winter. Additionally, the November snowstorm of 1913 was the featured historical presentation.
- Emergency Management and the Local Planning Team are working toward a total re-write of the Emergency Operations Plan by transferring it over to a more functional annex-driven plan organized by the FEMA's Emergency Support Functions. This will ensure seamless understanding of our capabilities and clearly demonstrate each agency's responsibilities during a disaster event.
- The Local Emergency Planning Committee is reorganizing its monthly agenda and refocusing on the County's 25+ hazardous materials reporting sites.

➤ **COMMUNITY HEALTH DIVISION**

- *DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS:*

Communicable Disease Program - First cases of influenza were confirmed by lab test in the state. Public health nurses continue to monitor absenteeism in schools during influenza season.

Adolescent Clinics -Transitioning from Third Level Crisis Center to Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services for mental health counseling at the Adolescent Health Centers.

- *MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH PROGRAMS*

MIHP/WIC - Promoting and providing flu and pertussis (whooping cough) vaccines to pregnant moms and their families. Completed the MIHP Site Survey and working on plan of correction to address deficiencies. MIHP improved their maternal admission to the program rate from 59% to 76% from the previous month. This is great improvement to reach moms and babies who qualify. WIC continues to implement staffing and scheduling pilots to better meet the needs of our clients and improve our appointment show rate.

Children's Special Health Care Services - Current enrollment is 301 clients. Continue to receive referrals from the Medicaid Health Plans.

Hearing and Vision - Michigan is adding funding, approximately \$65 million, for preschools likely to be noticed this next fall. This would create an increase of roughly 50% over our current preschool enrollment. Since preschool is our primary target, this will potentially increase the demand for staff time and equipment needs. A new preschool vision screening method is coming out over this next year, which includes a new protocol using sets of cards rather than the large, oddly-shaped screening unit in use currently. We have requested to be added to the Alert Now notices for all schools in TCAPs which is used when situations arise at the school. Additionally, since our technicians spent significant time at TCAPs sites, we would like to have them included in any training for drills and emergencies with groups of students so that they can be prepared for their role. This year, as in past years, we have asked for parent volunteers to assist with transporting students to and from vision and hearing tests.

Immunizations - Beginning October 4, 2013, the Grand Traverse County Health Department offered to the public flu vaccinations every Friday. Additionally, we expanded our open hours to include the lunchtime so that we could be available for walk-in during this time. We have received feedback from the public that they appreciate the convenience of walking in and getting served timely rather than making an appointment. Our at-risk populations are served at local churches, Grand Traverse Industry, and TCAPs bus drivers.

Human Resources (5)

- Negotiations continue with AFSCME, Teamsters General, and Teamsters Command.
- Recruiting for four open positions County-wide. (5)
- We have processed 92 job requisitions so far this year, compared to 78 for the entire year last year. (5)
- Training for the new Globally Harmonized System (GHS) of classification and labeling of chemicals is wrapping up with three more training dates set for November. (4)
- Thank you to the County Relay for Life Team on their recent fundraising event at Culvers. Not only did it raise \$255.91 for the American Cancer Society, but it's a great way to show the community that County employees are involved in their community
- Congratulations to Sally Dreves on re-election to her fourth term to the MERS Board.

MSU Extension

Initiatives that advance the health and quality of life of the region (Strategic Goal 7):

- Safe Kids North Shore participated in the nationally sponsored Seat Check Saturday on September 21, along with 400 other seat checks in the nation. The event was held at Williams Chevrolet on US 31 in Traverse City. Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPSTs) were on site to ensure the safe and proper fit of dozens of car seats for infants, toddlers and school age children. New seats were provided to several families in need through a grant from Safe Kids USA. One family in attendance at the event had been in a severe car crash the night prior. Everyone was ok, including their child that was with them, but the car was totaled. The deputy on scene was one of our CPSTs and told the family if they could find a ride to the Seat Check event we would help them replace the child's car seat. The family said they were very grateful to not have the additional burden of replacing the car seat along with the vehicle. Several Williams Chevrolet employees worked alongside our CPST's all day and reported that they learned a great deal listening to us talk to families about various safety issues (hyperthermia, unused seat belts, spot the tot, etc.). They were excited to be able to share this info with their clients.

Parks and Recreation (7)

- **2012-2015 Strategic Plan Update**
 - A. Develop program plans for adults, youth, day camp, and special events**
 - Our survey tool has been tested by the Sunrise Rotary Club, alterations made, reflecting the feedback from the test respondents.
 - B. Develop business plans for Power Island and Twin Lakes**
 - The Business Development Team for Business Planning met on October 8 and October 28 to discuss business plans for Power Island.
- **Water Safety for Freshman Program Partnerships**
 - The Parks and Recreation Department hosted its first session with Traverse City West High School freshmen at Easling Pool on Wednesday, October 30.
- **New Recreation Center Need/Feasibility Update**
 - The New Recreation Center BDT has not met since August 2013.
 - PRC members were forwarded all of the meeting notes from the BDT meetings, following the discussion of the September PRC meeting.
- **Birmley Road Property**
 - We are working with ProVisions to develop the proposal for a new, air-supported dome structure on the County's Birmley Property. ProVisions' work on this has slowed due to some unexpected, time-sensitive challenges related to another project.
- **Power Island Deer Management**

- Power Island is open to the public for archery deer hunting.
- The Director has received 30 MDNR Deer Management Assistance Permits (DMAPs) for Power Island. Power Island Ranger, Fred Tank, has developed a team of individuals tasked with hunting up to 30 deer on Power Island using the DMAPs. His colleagues were chosen based on their experience and training in biology and earth sciences. Once the deer are harvested, they will be taken for reduced-rate processing into venison burgers to be donated to Food Rescue and delivered to food pantries in Grand Traverse County.

➤ **Maple Bay Firearm Signs**

- While reviewing documents for the MDNR Trust Fund, the department learned that the signs on our Maple Bay Property designating a “gun line” (line that does not allow for firearm hunting beyond it) may have been in violation of our grant agreement with the MNRTF. We are working with owners of Orchard Shores Homeowners’ Association and have sent a letter to each owner giving at least 30 days notice that the signs will be removed in preparation for firearm hunting season. Facilities Management is scheduled to remove the “gun line” signs on November 14, 2013.

Prosecutor’s Office (1,7)

➤ **PROSECUTION**

As the County’s Chief Law Enforcement Officer, the Prosecuting Attorney is responsible for the prosecution of crimes including juvenile, misdemeanor and felony offenses, protection of abused and neglected children, and establishment of child support for needy children. For the month of October, we engaged in the following:

- Authorized 182 misdemeanor warrants
- Authorized 43 felony warrants
- Authorized 33 juvenile warrants
- Initiated 4 neglect/abuse cases (Our office has 49 open neglect/abuse cases involving 74 children)
- Reviewed 28 referrals from the office of child support
- Handles the following matters in Family Court:
 - 3 paternity cases
 - 10 child support cases
 - Obtained 11 judgments of child support

➤ **CIVIL COUNSEL**

Contract Drafting and Review

As the County’s civil counsel, we assist various County departments in reviewing and drafting contracts and other agreements. Our involvement ranges from reviewing a contract and approving it “as to form,” to negotiating the terms and conditions of the contract with the other party. For the month of October, we reviewed **eleven** contracts for the following departments:

- Health: Three
- Sheriff: One
- Parks and Recreation: Three
- IT: One
- Commission on Aging: Two
- Traverse Area District Library (TADL) Board

FOIA Coordination

In 1997, the County Board of Commissioners designated the Prosecuting Attorney as the FOIA coordinator for Grand Traverse County. As the coordinator, we ensure that the various county departments are complying with Michigan's FOIA law including determining whether the requested information should be exempt from disclosure. For the month of October, we reviewed **four** FOIA requests, and provided advice and consultation to the following departments:

- Central Dispatch

Board of Commissioners/ Staff Questions

Part of our duties as Civil Counsel involves answering questions and preparing opinion memoranda for the Board of Commissioners and County staff related to a wide variety of issues, ranging from compliance with state and federal statutes to advising on exposure to liability. For the month of October, we prepared **five** memoranda for the Board of Commissioners and various departments including:

- Parks and Recreation
- Health
- Environmental Health
- Sheriff
- Treasurer

Ordinance Drafting

As you know, under MCL 46.11, a county board of commissioners has the authority to adopt ordinances related to county affairs. One of our responsibilities is to prepare, amend or repeal ordinances when requested by the Board of Commissioners. **In October, we did not draft any ordinances.**

Litigation

We represent the County in civil actions filed in the Grand Traverse County District and Circuit Courts as well as the Federal District Courts. For the month of October, we represent the County in the following cases:

- *Parcel 80 BIA Appeal.* We have filed this appeal challenging the decision of the Michigan Agency of the Bureau of Indian Affairs placing

12 acres of property into trust owned by the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. In October of 2012, the Grand Traverse Band filed an application with the Michigan Agency requesting 12 acres of property located in Acme Township near the Turtle Creek Casino and Hotel be placed into trust pursuant to the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. This federal act allows recognized Native American Tribes to place land into trust, which has the affect of making property exempt from taxation. On February 28, 2013, the Superintendent for the Michigan Agency issued a decision to place the 12 acres into trust. On April 2, 2013, we filed a notice of appeal challenging the decision of the Superintendent. Citing to the United States Supreme Court decision *Carcieri v. Salazar*, we have argued that the Superintendent was without authority to place the property into trust because the Grand Traverse Band was not recognized by the Federal government in 1934 when the Indian Reorganization Act was adopted. The appeal is pending with the Regional Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It will take the Regional Director at least 60 days to decide the appeal. On May 2, 2013, we filed a statement of reasons with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which is similar to an appellate brief. In the statement we again argued that the *Carcieri* decision mandates reversal of the Superintendent's decision placing Parcel 80 into trust. **We continue to await a decision from the Regional Director.**

- *Parcel 82 BIA Appeal.* On August 1, we filed an appeal challenging the decision of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Midwest Regional Director placing 158 acres of property into trust owned by the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. In November of 2011, the Grand Traverse Band filed an application with the Regional Director requesting 158 acres of property located in Acme Township near the Turtle Creek Casino and Hotel be placed into trust pursuant to the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. On July 2, 2013, the Regional Director issued a decision to place the property into trust. We filed a notice of appeal challenging the decision of the Director. As we did in the Parcel 80 appeal, citing to the United States Supreme Court decision *Carcieri v. Salazar*, we have argued that the Director was without authority to place the property into trust because the Grand Traverse Band was not recognized by the Federal government in 1934 when the Indian Reorganization Act was adopted. **The appeal is still pending with the Bureau of Indian Affairs Appeals Board.**
- Tax Tribunal Cases. At the Board of Commissioner's April regular meeting, the Board authorized us to assist the Townships and the City of Traverse City in tax appeals pending before the Michigan Tax Tribunal. In October, in order to assist the City with the defense of their cases, we filed five motions to intervene involving the following properties located in Traverse City. **The motions are still pending in the Tax Tribunal:**
 - i. *TC Golf and County Club:* Petitioner is challenging the City's assessment of property located at 1725 Union Street. In 2012, the City determined that the property has an assessed value of

\$2,106,700. The petitioner is claiming that the assessed value should be \$850,000, a difference of over \$1.2 million.

- ii. *Radio Centre Partners Phase II*: Petitioner is challenging the City's assessment of property located at 125 Park Street. In 2012, the City determined that the property has an assessed value of \$1,770,600. The petitioner is claiming that the assessed value should be \$1,250,000, a difference of approximately \$500,000.
- iii. *Pine Street Development One, LLC*: Petitioner is challenging the City's assessment of property located at 305 West Front Street. In 2013, the City determined that the property has an assessed value of \$1,427,700. The petition is claiming that the assessed value should be \$1,000,000, a difference of over \$427,000 dollars.
- iv. *Lakeport Investments LLC*: Petitioner is challenging the City's assessment of property located at 1001 Bay Street. In 2013, the City determined that the property has an assessed value of \$519,400. The petitioner is claiming that the assessed value should be \$400,000, a difference of over \$100,000.
- v. *Great Northern Broadcasting*: Petitioner is challenging the City's assessments of property located at 13983 and 13999 SW Bay Shore Drive. In 2013, the City determined that the properties have a combined assessed value of \$904,700. The petitioner is claiming that the assessed value should be \$600,000, a difference of over \$300,000.

Board of Commissioners Meetings

We attend every Board meeting, committee meeting and any special meetings. For the month of October, Bob Cooney attended the regular meeting. Chris Forsyth also attended the Public Health and Safety, Resource Management and Administration, and the Ways and Means meeting.

Miscellaneous

In addition to the items discussed above, we assist the Board of Commissioners and County departments in other ways. Some items to note include:

- We continue to monitor the case filed in Circuit Court involving the removal of the Boardman Dam -- *Reneaud v. City of Traverse City, et al.* In order to protect the County's interests as a member of the Boardman Dams Implementation Team, we have engaged in constant communication with the various attorneys who represent the entities that comprise the IT. **On October 4, the IT held a special meeting where they agreed to tender the lawsuit to AMEC, the contractor who removed the Dam. The contractor's insurance carrier has assigned attorney Scott Howard to defend the IT.**

- We continue to assist Administration in various issues related to the ongoing dams removal project.
- We assisted local townships including answers to Open Meetings Act and storm water ordinance issues.

Planning/Brownfield/Economic Development/Housing (1,3,4,7,8)

- Two Brownfield plans, 647 E. Eighth Street and 147 E. Eighth Street, in Traverse City were approved by the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. Next, the plans will be presented to the City Commission for concurrence.
- Department staff, representing the Grand Traverse Region Next Michigan Development Corporation, is actively engaged in the Steering Team for the implementation team of Michigan's Logistics and Supply Chain as led by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and other key state departments.
- On October 22, the second of five meetings was held to develop the Bayshore Corridor Strategy from Acme to Elmwood. Over 30 agencies were represented to identify how their resources can improve the corridor. Next, staff will meet individually with all four planning commissions involved in the process.

Resource Recovery (8)

- Four Household Hazardous Waste events were held during 2013. Approximately 800 participants dropped off 114,411 pounds (over 57 tons) of material. Four events are in the process of being scheduled for 2014.
- The Michigan Green Consortium will be holding a Clean up, Green Up event on Sunday, November 3, 2013 from 9:00am until 3:00pm at the American Waste TS/MRF, 280 Hughes Drive, Traverse City. The event provides participants an opportunity to recycle a wide range of materials.
- Saturday, November 23 (pending weather conditions) is the final day of the 2013 season at the Brush Drop-Off Site on Keystone Road. Hours are: Tuesdays, noon to dusk and Thursdays and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Resource Recovery Department would like to thank Dave Jameson for his operation of the site through the season.
- Susie Shipman started as Manager of the Resource Recovery Department on October 7. Susan met with the RR Council on November 7 to get input regarding the 2013 and 2014 budgets and plans to propose changes to the county's RR budget at the upcoming budget meeting with the county board.

Veterans Affairs (7)

- VA Health Care Clinic Expansion Delayed

The expansion of the VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Traverse City that was approved in FY 2011-12 has run into an unexpected delay. This sorely

needed space expansion was to over double the clinic space and also add several clinical specialty physicians and support staff. This expansion should have been close to or even completed by now.

On September 30, I was able to sit down with the Director of the VA Medical Center in Saginaw who has jurisdiction over the TC clinic and a staff member from Congressman Benishek's office (Congressman Benishek sits on the House Committee on Veterans Affairs). We were able to communicate our dissatisfaction with the lack of progress on this project. We were informed that following a "market survey," the VA had concluded that no sufficient office space to meet the clinic's needs was available in Traverse City. Due to this finding, the Saginaw VAMC has now applied to the VA's Central Office to receive authorization to seek a build-to-suit development project for the Traverse City clinic. At this writing, no approval for this request has been received. The bureaucracy of the build process within the VA differs greatly from the lease/renovate process, and if authorization is received, it will be years before the Traverse City clinic can expand.

We are almost three years now since the county was authorized to expand access to needed health services for our residents, and we are now told that we will need to start over. We have asked Congressman Benishek to look closely into this issue and work in behalf of our residents to seek a solution.

- The Director worked with the Administrator/Controller and Representative Wayne Schmidt to make sure the county's concerns about the new legislation exempting veterans who are classified as 100% disabled from the property tax, especially the provision that extends the exemption to those considered "unemployable." We are currently awaiting information from the VA regarding those who are eligible under the definitions in the new legislation.