

PRESS RELEASE

Grand Traverse County

The Board of Commissioners voted to settle the Teamsters Sheriff Department Command Unit arbitration related to the action taken to require employees to pay 20% of the cost of their health insurance. One reason for this is the Teamsters bargaining unit agreed to language which would alleviate any disputes in the future on this issue. Also, the Board feels it is time to put this behind us because a \$500,000 saving to the General Fund occurred in 2017 even with this settlement.

The Sheriff's other Unions' (POAM, COAM, TPOAM) Unfair Practice Charges were upheld by MERC. However, it should be noted that because the Board of Commissioners approved the 80/20 health insurance option, approximately \$500,000 was saved in 2017 even with the adverse ruling. Also, approximately that amount of money will be saved in 2018 if the Board of Commissioners continues the 80/20 option. The total General Fund savings in two years should exceed \$1 million. The County offered to settle with the POAM/COAM/TPOAM but they refused the proposal which was the same as accepted by the Teamsters. However, the Board of Commissioners has offered another proposed settlement, which we hope will be accepted by those bargaining units.

It is common for 20% health insurance employee pay – for example, Traverse City employees have been paying 20% toward health insurance for approximately 10 years.

Two County Unions (AFSCME and COAM 911) agreed to pay 20% toward the cost of their health insurance.

Also, the four Teamsters Units in Fact Finding have now agreed to language regarding Employer choice under PA 152 which results in a 20% employee co-pay on health insurance.

The Board of Commissioners and the County Administration made a prudent decision in authorizing the 20% employee co-pay on health insurance because it saved approximately \$500,000 in 2017 and another approximately \$500,000 in 2018 if the Board of Commissioners choose the 80/20 option. Advice and action that results in a \$500,000 savings per year is good advice and good for the County taxpayers.