



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 6, 2015

County Board Extends State of Emergency Declaration; Plans Retreat

Traverse City, Grand Traverse County – Following an update on cleanup efforts and damage assessment during last night’s Public Health and Safety Committee meeting, your county commissioners voted unanimously to sign a resolution to extend the declaration of the local state of emergency through August 23, 2015. “This is just the beginning,” said Bird, who has been meeting on a daily basis with key area officials to receive updates on power outages and preliminary property damage assessments, and to coordinate resources and debris removal efforts. Focusing on debris recovery and disposal now is a priority, according to Bird, and one of the most challenging obstacles in the lengthy clean-up process following the destructive thunderstorm of Sunday, August 2. The county has been under a local state of emergency status since Monday, August 3, as declared by County Commission Chair Christine Maxbauer and Bird.

Bay Area Transportation Authority Executive Director and Grand Traverse County consultant Tom Menzel also briefed the board on an overall plan to strategically move the county into future. Assisted by two county staff members, Menzel presented steps to be taken during the next few months as commissioners create a new strategic plan and develop the 2016 budget.

To kick off the strategic planning process, Menzel proposed a day-long commissioner retreat to be scheduled later this month. Commissioners welcomed the idea of participating in a retreat, which will be led by Barbara Jordan Ellis of Traverse City, owner of the Center for Coaching and Leadership Development. Jordan Ellis has offered to facilitate the retreat at no cost. Maxbauer commended Jordan Ellis for being so civic-minded as to assist the board with planning the future.

County Planning Department Director John Sych presented outcomes and recommendations from a recent meeting about budgeting for outcomes involving representatives of the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and a team of county staff members, Menzel, and interim Human Resources Director Paula Sagala. Parks and Recreation Director Kristine Erickson, recently asked to be the media contact for county administration and the county board matters, discussed the strategic goal to improve communications among staff, commissioners, the community, and the media.

Menzel summarized the presentation with, “Change is inevitable, but growth is optional, and the only thing I guarantee . . . is nothing ever stays the same.” He added that “it is a lot better to be in an organization that is moving forward and is planning forward,” rather than waiting and wondering what is next.

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