



## Administrator/Controller Report April 2014

### 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

### Administration (1)

- The Board Chair and Administrator met with the Mayor and City Manager to discuss Housing issues, and staff will be putting together concepts to address incentives for development of affordable housing.
- The city and county also discussed the Woodmere and Front Street facilities regarding the need to develop lease agreements going forward.
- Field work will begin in mid-April on the Boardman Dams. URS will be setting up stations and gauges and creating models for post-project flood impacts. The Depth of Refusal (DOR) study will also be conducted to determine pre-dam bathymetry (plot the course of the original riverbed.)

### Commission on Aging (7)

- **SENIOR CENTER RENOVATION PROJECT**  
A request went before the City Commission on March 17, 2014 to secure architectural services of Cornwell Architects for the Traverse City Senior Center renovation project.
- **WAIT LISTS**  
The Commission on Aging Program Committee continues to address wait list concerns – number of persons on the wait list and length of time waiting. Our largest wait list is for our Home Chore (outside maintenance) services. Our Homemaker Aide (housecleaning) and Home Health Care programs have no wait lists at this time.
- **CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION**  
Certificates of appreciation were presented to Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home/Peg Jonkhoff (Sponsorship of Senior Center Network events/shuffleboard tournaments), Great Lakes Therapy House Calls/Jim Harvey (sponsorship of Senior Center Network events), Kathleen Guest (articles in the Traverse City Record Eagle), and Westwoods

Elementary School (Thanksgiving dinner provided to senior citizens each year by the PTO/students).

➤ DEPUTY DIRECTOR RESIGNATION

The Deputy Director position has been posted, and interviews will take place sometime in mid-April.

**Equalization (1)**

- Equalization has received final assessment databases from all the local units. All have established a level of assessment that has met the levels as determined by Equalization studies. There is an overall increase of assessed value by 2.13%. This increase exceeded the 1.6% rate of inflation. The overall increase in total real and personal property taxable value is around 1.76%.
- The new personal property legislation to exempt commercial and industrial personal property under \$80,000 True Cash Value (TCV) has caused an 8% reduction in commercial and industrial personal property taxable value. Due to the increase in other types of personal property the overall decrease in personal property taxable value is around 4.3%.
- The county-wide March Board of Review process went very well as reported by local assessors. The traffic was light, and there were minimal appeals. East Bay appraisers reported similar results for their March Board of Review. Commercial and Industrial properties may appeal directly to the Michigan Tax Tribunal by May 3, so the overall possible reduction due to appeals remains to be seen.

**Finance (1)**

- Attended the MMRMA Finance Committee meeting on March 5. The MMRMA Board of Directors declared a \$34.5 million net asset distribution to members. The net asset distribution will be based on length of continued membership, loss experience, and premium contributions. This will be the eighth year in the last nine years that a net asset distribution has been declared.
- Field work for the 2013 Audit has been completed. Staff also assisted with the workers' compensation annual audit during the past month.
- The website has been updated based on the comments and suggestions received from the Website Review Committee.
- Updated various information included in the MuniCast Financial Forecasting model to include final budget and actual data for 2013 and fund balance information for the past several years.

**Health Department & Emergency Management (7)**

➤ ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE DIVISION

- Medical Examiner - A temporary deputy medical examiner was appointed by the

board until the end of March due to an unexpected leave from Dr. Houghton. Dr. Nicole Fliss will serve as the primary deputy and Dr. Kari Young will serve as her backup. Both are willing to stay in the role indefinitely at this time.

- Water Safety Grant - GTCHD submitted a “Northwest Michigan Safe and Healthy Beaches” grant through the NOAA Coastal Storms Great Lakes project. The grant would bring much needed beach and water safety signage, equipment and a multi-media education and outreach campaign. This grant is the result of several local agencies working together towards collective community impact. Partners include: Munson Health Care, MSU Extension-Safe Kids North Shore, GT County Parks and Rec, The Watershed Center and the US Coast Guard. If awarded, this grant will complement the 2% Beach Monitoring grant already received.

➤ ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION

- Beach Monitoring Grant Award - The Grand Traverse County Health Department was successful in receiving a \$25,000 grant from the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians as part of a 2% allocation award to support the 2014 beach monitoring program. The grant will allow 13 coastal beaches in Grand Traverse, Leelanau, and Benzie Counties to be tested weekly for E.Coli bacteria from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Elevated E.Coli levels at beaches pose a hazard to human health. EPA studies indicate that when the numbers of E.Coli in fresh water exceed water quality standards, swimmers are at an increased risk of developing illnesses such as gastroenteritis, ear and eye infections and other illnesses from pathogens in fecal contaminated water.
- Scanning Project Moving Forward - The Environmental Health Division is moving forward with a scanning project which will eventually result in well and septic information being available on-line to the public. We have been working closely with the IT Department to get the software and hardware in place. It is estimated that over 40,000 records will need to be scanned.
- Animal Control - With the advent of spring, our Animal Control Officers are increasing their time on the road, patrolling for loose dogs. As noted in past years, the warmer weather typically results in more loose dog activity as people and their pets come out of hibernation.

➤ EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & PREPAREDNESS DIVISION

- County Lockdown Policy - A county building lock-down policy was drafted, reviewed by Administration and Human Resources and approved.
- Agro-Terrorism Full Scale Exercise - The emergency manager and emergency preparedness coordinator are working closely with the Michigan National Guard 51st Civil Support Team developing a Full Scale Exercise dealing with a multidisciplinary agro-terrorism event in the region, hosted by Grand Traverse County. The 51st is one of but a few elite support teams that specialize in Chemical, Biological, Environmental, & Nuclear responses.

- Training and Exercises - Conducted a Table Top Exercise for Cherry Fest organization and continue to plan an exercise for the Grand Traverse Mall Security; Planning meeting on the US Postal Service Bio Detection System full scale exercise in the fall.

➤ COMMUNITY HEALTH DIVISION

*DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS:* Coordinated and provided “safety day” training to all Health Department employees. Some topics included blood borne pathogens, fire safety, assisting clients not proficient in English, surviving an active shooter, and the new lock down policy.

- Communicable Disease Program - Completed the OSHA Manual updates for all Health Department sites improving the “exposure” guidance. Followed up on all reportable communicable diseases in our County. Provided guidance to two elementary schools on Norovirus prevention. Updated the head lice treatment guidelines we provide clients. Participated in the Infection Prevention meeting at Munson Medical Center. Two nurses were able to participate in a two-day intensive clinical sexually transmitted disease testing, training, and update.
- Reproductive Health – Exploring options to serve our clients with health insurance enrollment assistance and continuing to provide services to them and bill the insurance they are eligible for. Implemented reminder calls to decrease “no shows.” Provided oversight to assure all staff performing lab functions on site were observed for their “competency” for the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendment requirements.
- Adolescent Clinics - Preparing for the staff training related to Electronic Health Record implementation scheduled to “go live” in June 2014. Preparing to cross-train the Public Health Techs in WIC for back up staffing at the Adolescent Health Centers.

*MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH PROGRAMS:*

- Maternal Infant Health Program - As part of the Maternal Smoking Cessation workgroup, part of the Perinatal Regional Initiative for 21 counties in Northern Michigan, we collaborated with Munson to provide a Change Readiness half-day conference presented by Bill Paxton, LMSW from Pine Rest using Motivational Interviewing as a technique with moms. The conference has been approved for 3.5 education contact hours and will be held April 11 at the Grand Traverse County Health Department. We are registering up to 60 public health clinicians from participating local health departments.
- Healthy Futures - Attended Five to One Network Workgroup meeting with Great Start Collaborative partners, including Healthy Futures. This is a five-county initiative in the early planning stages, facilitated by Dr. Cynthia Honore-Collins of Cornerstone. High level goals for this initiative are to Improve Kindergarten Readiness, Improve

Access to Quality Child Care, and Reduce Child Abuse and Neglect.

### **Human Resources (5)**

- Employee Recognition team is soliciting nominations for Volunteer of the Year for April and working on Public Service Week articles coming in May. (4)
- The Wellness Team is in discussion for a newsletter to be delivered quarterly to employees. This will have topics of health and fitness.
- ❖ Thank you to all who participated in the Relay for Life Culver's fundraiser last week, by either working at Culver's delivering meals to customers or ordering meals. We raised just over \$200 for the County's Relay for Life Team!

### **Information Technology**

- A new document imaging application is under development for Environmental Health to store well and septic records. The application will allow the scanning of all well and septic records on file and will include indexes by parcel number and address for retrieval. The system is currently in the test stage. Once implemented, the staff and a public workstation will have online access to the records. The eventual goal is to have the GIS mapping application be the front end for retrieval of the documents.
- A new physical server and additional storage (16 Terabytes) are being added to the virtual server environment. This will be completed by the end of March and will provide the necessary resources to upgrade the servers and software utilized by document imaging and police applications that will be upgraded this year.

### **Parks and Recreation (7)**

- PRN GTRec Experience Expo - The Grand Traverse Region Parks and Recreation Network's "GTRec Experience" Expo will be held on Sunday, May 4, 2014 from noon to 5 p.m. at the Civic Center. Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan is sponsoring the Second Annual GTRec Experience Expo, and has presented a \$5,000 check to Grand Traverse Parks and Recreation on behalf of the PRN to underwrite the event. Free booth space will be offered again to participating parks and recreation and cultural organizations, entities, and businesses.

The first meeting of GTRec Expo Planning Committee was held Tuesday, March 18. That committee will send exhibitor invitations and packets; develop a marketing and promotions plan for vendors and attendees; and develop all materials to be disseminated.

Easling Pool has been reserved from 2:30 to 5 p.m. during this event for water demonstrations such as paddle boarding and more. The Civic Center Conference Room has been reserved for arts and cultural demonstrations.

- Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan - During two special meetings held in March 2014, the Parks and Recreation Commission developed a new 2014-2015 Strategic Plan. The plan was adopted during the commission's regular meeting held March 20, 2014. The plan is comprised of nine items, to be completed in less than a two-year time frame and

is a living document that may be modified by the commission, as needed. This plan replaces the 2012-2015 former Parks and Recreation Plan.

- Free Spring Break Family Open Swimming at Easling Pool - The Parks and Recreation Commission voted during its regular meeting in February to offer some free family open swim times for County residents during spring break. All but one day during the ten-day break had at least one block of time during Easling Pool's hours of operation devoted to free family open swimming. The commission decided to offer open swimming to give all County residents an opportunity to enjoy what Easling Pool has to offer, including water safety educational opportunities, such as American Red Cross lessons.

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

- Marcia Carmoney started as a new Office Specialist for the Department. Marcia will be working as a "meeting manager" by coordinating the preparation and follow-up for the five board meetings staffed by the Department each month. Marcia previously held a position in the County Clerk Department.
- A PACE Business Forum was held on March 14 and hosted by EPI, Inc. on South Airport Road in Garfield Township. Approximately 40 business representatives attending the event learned more about the energy-efficiency financing PACE program. A Resolution of Intent for the PACE program will be presented to the Board of Commissioners for its consideration in April.
- Deputy Director, Jean Derenzy, is currently chairing the Funding Availability and Priority Committee of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's Brownfield Continuous Program Improvement Process. This appointment is part of a multiple committee effort to streamline the brownfield redevelopment process for communities and developers.

### **Prosecuting Attorney (7)**

The following is a monthly report of Prosecutor's Office activity for the month of **February 2014**.

- 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 February, we engaged in the following:

- Authorized 145 misdemeanor warrants, 48 felony warrants, and 10 juvenile warrants
- Initiated 1 neglect/abuse case (Our office has 50 open neglect/abuse cases involving 75 children) and reviewed 22 referrals from the office of child support
  - Handled the following matters in Family Court: 7 paternity cases, 12 child support cases, and obtained 12 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 February, we reviewed **four** contracts for the following departments: Health Dept., Commission on Aging, Resource Recovery, and Parks and Recreation.

#### *FOIA Coordination*

As the county’s FOIA 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 February, we reviewed 11 FOIA requests, and provided advice and consultation to the Board of Commissioners, Central Dispatch, and Parks and Recreation

#### *Board of Commissioners/ Staff Questions*

Civil Counsel answers questions and prepares 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 February, we answered questions/prepared memos for the Board of Commissioners, Commission on Aging, Health Department, and Parks and Recreation.

#### *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 February, we represented the County in the following cases:

- *Parcel 80 BIA Appeal.* We continue to await a decision from the Regional Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs on the Superintendent’s decision to place this 12 acre parcel into trust.
- *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. On December 30, we filed our appellate brief with the Appeals Board. The Tribe, Secretary of Interior, and other interested parties will have the opportunity to file responsive briefs within the next 30 days. We expect the Appeals Board to take at least six months to decide our appeal. On January 31, we received notice from the Office of the Field Solicitor for the Secretary of the Interior that they were seeking an extension of time to file a response brief. On February 4, the Field Solicitor filed a response brief. We expect the Appeals Board will take several months to issue an opinion.
- *In the matter of the Petition of the Grand Traverse County Treasurer for Foreclosure*

*of Certain Parcels of Property (2011 Unpaid Property Taxes)*. If real property taxes are unpaid, Michigan's General Property Tax Act, MCL 211.78 et seq, permits the County Treasurer to commence a tax foreclosure action in circuit court requesting that the Court transfer ownership of the property to the County. MCL 211.78 allows the Treasurer to obtain a judgment of foreclosure after a hearing and notice to the affected property owners. By law, the hearing occurs three years after delinquent taxes are due. The three year period allows the property owner to redeem the property or enter a payment plan with the Treasurer. On February 3, Judge Power conducted a hearing and granted the Treasurer's request for a judgment of foreclosure. This case is now closed.

#### *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 assist Administration in various issues related to the ongoing dams removal project.
- We are working with the Health Department and the Circuit Court on an effort to recover the Health Department's costs of recovery the cost of testing criminal defendants for HIV and other STDs as mandated by state law for certain offenses.

#### **Resource Recovery (8)**

- Staff attended the March Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) meeting held by the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments. Resource Recovery staff were present from several Northwest Michigan Counties. The main topics of discussion included committee collaboration on waste and recycling tracking software and the recycling funding and planning currently under consideration at the State level.
- Earth Day Events - In cooperation with the City of Traverse City and Traverse City Light and Power, the following annual events are scheduled to be held at the location of the Sara Hardy Farmer's Market (Grandview Parkway and Union Street) in downtown Traverse City:
  - April 26, 2014 - Seedling Giveaway - Free eastern white pine (*pinus strobus*) seedlings will be distributed by Traverse City Light & Power (TCL&P) beginning at 8 a.m. until gone.
  - April 26, 2014 - Compost Giveaway - Courtesy of the City of Traverse City & Grand Traverse County Resource Recovery Department, free compost will be distributed on a self-service, self-haul basis beginning at 8 a.m. until Noon (or until all compost is gone).
  - April 21 thru April 27 - Clean Out Your Files Week - American Waste is donating the use of a recycling container to help downtown businesses recycle unwanted paper material. Accepted material includes newspapers, magazines, old files, office paper, and unwanted mail.
- Weather and site conditions permitting, the Keystone Brush site will be open to the public starting Saturday, April 5, 2014. The site will be open through the summer and fall on



Tuesday, Noon to 7 p.m., as well as Thursday and Saturday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Resource Recovery Department is welcoming back David Jameson, who is returning for a third year as the gate attendant.

## **Veteran's Affairs (7)**

### ➤ State Veterans Legislation

Several pieces of proposed legislation targeted towards veterans and their families in Michigan have been coming out of Lansing. Since January 1, 2014, 86 bills associated with a resident's veteran status have been introduced in the House and Senate. This represents approximately three new bills every day they have been in session. Everything from corporate, sales, property and individual income tax exemptions to fund-raising license plates seems to be covered in proposed legislation.

Highlight's of a few of these legislative initiatives:

- Allowing the use of certain military training and experience as the basis for licensure for a slew of occupations from contractor's licenses to dental assistants to law enforcement officers and firefighters.
- American flags in cemeteries must be made in America.
- Grant high school diplomas to Vietnam War Veterans who did not graduate.
- Hold local municipalities harmless in the issuance of property tax exemptions to veterans.
- Disclosure of veterans' benefits availability in prepaid burial contracts.
- Allow for veterans hiring preference for private businesses.
- Require warning signs at tattoo parlors that certain tattoos may disqualify individuals from military service.