



# Administrator/Controller Report September 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

### Boardman River Dams Project (8)

- The EPA submitted its comments to the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regarding the Detailed Project Report and the Environmental Assessment, and the USACE indicates that it will take at least an additional two months to collect the additional information that was requested. This means that it will be a few more months before the county knows if USACE funding will be available for the project.

### Central Dispatch/911 (2,3,4)

- The County is asking voters to provide full funding for 911 emergency dispatch services with a \$1.85 surcharge on all telephone devices. The additional funding will be used to pay for 911 operating costs that are currently subsidized by the county general fund, provide for adequate staffing, and begin replacement of long-overdue capital equipment. GT 911 has a capital project needs list that totals \$1.6 million dollars.

When the county implemented consolidated emergency dispatch and enhanced 911 many years ago, over 70% of the counties in the state asked the voters to pay for the increased costs through either a new dedicated millage or a higher surcharge to cover the operating and capital costs of the service. Grand Traverse County did not, and used its general fund to subsidize the enhanced services. The county is asking the voters to approve full, stable, long term funding for this important service to the citizens and emergency response agencies.

- Staffing: Five positions are currently vacant. One of the major problems we have in successfully training and retaining dispatch staff directly relates to the workload in the dispatch center. There are very few people who can function at the level that is necessary to be successful here. Additionally, it is extremely difficult to train people on-the-job when we are consistently understaffed and the CTO's (Communication Training Officers) are continually interrupted when working with probationary telecommunications. We simply need more staff to alleviate this long-term problem. Adequate staff would allow the CTO's to devote some uninterrupted time for training, which would help our new people be successful. And having more staff to cover shifts, sick time, vacations, and training would do a lot to help keep our current dispatch staff from burning out.

## **Finance (1)**

- Working on development of 2015 Budget. Will be bringing budget balancing scenarios to BOC. Need Departmental cooperation to reduce costs. Maintaining current services will be a challenge.

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

### **ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE DIVISION**

- Finance & Administration Director – Conducted third set of interviews for the position which resulted in a job offer and acceptance. The Department will be announcing the appointment soon.
- Traverse City Film Festival-Environmental Health staff was busy inspecting temporary food venues associated with the 2014 Traverse City Film Festival. We also assisted in setting up and take down of the Baby Tent which provided outreach education at the Children's Film Events located at Central Grade School.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISIONS**

- Beach Monitoring-The Environmental Health Division hosted the Beach Monitoring Stakeholders meeting to discuss on-going monitoring of public beaches within Grand Traverse, Leelanau, and Benzie Counties for E.coli bacteria. Stakeholder members included individuals from the Grand Traverse County Health Department, Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department, City of Traverse City, Traverse City State Park/Department of Natural Resources, SOS Analytical Lab, the National Parks Service, and Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay.
- Response to Biosolids Release from Regional Sewage Treatment Plant-Environmental Health staff issued a Public Health Advisory on Wednesday, August 20, 2014 in response to a release of biosolids from the Regional Sewage Treatment Plant at the North end of Boardman Lake. The public was advised to avoid any contact of the waters at the North end of Boardman Lake, the lower Boardman River to the mouth of West Grand Traverse Bay, as well as beach areas from Clinch Park to Bryant Park. Follow-up surface water samples taken at both Clinch and Bryant Park beaches on Thursday showed E.coli levels to be acceptable for full body contact. The Public Health Advisory was lifted on Friday, August 22nd, once the sample results were received.

### **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & PREPAREDNESS DIVISION**

- Emergency Preparedness- Participating in an Anthrax Biohazard Detection System and Point of Dispensing Full Scale Exercise on Sept 17th with many community first responders. Health Department staff will set up a dispensing site for volunteers who are exposed and decontaminated to Anthrax so that we can assess and treat them.

## **Human Resources (5)**

- Currently recruiting for 8 positions County-wide. YTD 67 requisitions have been posted County-wide.
- Negotiations are being scheduled in September and October for 4 bargaining units: Teamsters General, Teamsters Dispatch, Teamsters Command and POAM Deputies.
- GT County Leadership training started on August 13<sup>th</sup> and will conclude on August 26<sup>th</sup>. The 3 part training session was held at NMC for all Supervisors, Department Heads and Elected Officials.
- The Written Hazard Communication policy was recently revised and approved. All employees received this policy with their paychecks on August 15<sup>th</sup>.

- ❖ Thank you Wellness Team and especially Cheri Tuller for another great Wellness BBQ and Expo! There were tons of great prizes and booths this year! Great job!

### MSUE (5, 7)

- Our Safe Kids North Shore Coordinator, Jennifer Ritter, has been serving as co-chair for the **Northwest MI Water Safety Network**, a coalition of numerous community agencies including the GT County Health Department, GT County Parks & Rec, US Coast Guard, MI Sea Grant, Red Cross, etc., which formed last year in response to recent drownings in the 5-county area. The group reports that they will soon be installing rescue stations on area beaches, along with water safety signage that will include QR codes for up-to-date water temperatures and advisories.
- The ***Weathering the Climate: Cultivation & Technology in Grape Production*** conference was held on September 5<sup>th</sup> at the Hagerty Center. Sessions covered topics like climate change & potential agronomic impacts, and impacts of the 2014 Polar Vortex on grapes. There was a vineyard demo of the application of unmanned systems technology at Chateau Chantal, followed by a panel discussion with local grape growers.
- Record sales, two auction rings and a new llama and goat barn were some of the highlights from this year's **Northwestern Michigan Fair**. It was beautiful weather all week and 4-H families enjoyed a great week of camping, showing animals, riding rides and all that happens at fair. The 4-H Livestock Council announced this was a record year for our 4-H market animal sales bringing in approximately \$700,000, \$100,000 more than 2013. Our 4-H youth were encouraged to reach out to businesses and new buyers in the community and we saw many new buyers at the 4-H auction. Our 4-H llama and goat project youth enjoyed the new barns to house their animals and this also opened up more room for our poultry barn. We had over 250 swine this year and have seen a general increase in youth participating in 4-H animal projects throughout the three counties at the fair. The end of August will begin a new 4-H marketing campaign statewide, with a goal of bringing in more 4-H youth and volunteer leaders. The changes made this year will allow for us to continue growing our 4-H program in animal science projects, as well as other learning opportunities – robotics, gardening, shooting sports, leadership/civic engagement, etc. If you have any questions, need additional information or would like to volunteer, please contact Karin Stevens, 922-4825 or [steve552@msu.edu](mailto:steve552@msu.edu).

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

- Northern Nexus is the new name for the Grand Traverse Next Michigan Development Corporation. Northern Nexus provides development assistance for expanding local multi-modal businesses and new multi-modal businesses locating in the area. The Northern Nexus board approved its first tax abatement. The abatement for Quantum Sails in East Bay Township will assist in their expanding operations and recent equipment purchase. Learn more about Northern Nexus at: <http://www.northernnexus.org>
- The Grand Traverse County Planning Commission is pleased to announce the upcoming Master Plan Workshop being conducted expressly for the planning commissioners, zoning board of appeals members, and elected officials in Grand Traverse County. The workshop will cover the basics of developing and implementing a master plan and will be held on Tuesday, September 30, 2014 at the Governmental Center from 5:45 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The fee is \$15 per person or \$75 for five or more. For information, contact the Planning & Development Department at 922-4676.
- The Brownfield Redevelopment Authority approved a development agreement and CDBG grant agreement with developers for the Uptown project on West State Street in Traverse City. Redevelopment of the site will result in 13 unique multi-story condominiums,

including five live-work, mixed-use units along the street frontage. First phase of the project is anticipated to be completed in spring of 2015.

### **Prosecuting Attorney (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 July, we engaged in the following:
  - Authorized 218 misdemeanor warrants
  - Authorized 21 felony warrants
  - Authorized 23 juvenile warrants
  - Initiated 4 neglect/abuse cases (Our office has 57 open neglect/abuse cases involving 86 children)
  - Reviewed 22 referrals from the office of child support
  - Handled the following matters in Family Court:
    - 5 paternity cases
    - 17 child support cases
    - Obtained 17 judgments of child support
    - 8 mentally ill commitment hearing

For the month of August, we engaged in the following:

- Authorized 164 misdemeanor warrants
- Authorized 29 felony warrants
- Authorized 17 juvenile petitions
- Initiated 1 neglect/abuse case
- Reviewed 7 referrals from the office of child support
- Handled the following matters in Family Court:
  - 2 paternity cases
  - 4 child support cases
  - Obtained 14 judgments of child support
  - 4 mentally ill commitment hearing

- **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 July, we reviewed five contracts for the following departments:

- Administration: One
- Parks and Recreation: One
- Sheriff: One
- Resource Recovery: One
- Health: One
- Commission on Aging: One

For the month of August, we reviewed seven contracts for the following departments:

- Administration: One
- Facilities Management: One
- Health: Three

- Finance: One
- Veteran Affairs: One

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 July, we reviewed six FOIA requests, and provided advice and consultation to the following departments:

- Central Dispatch: three
- Sheriff: one
- Animal Control: one
- Prosecuting Attorney: one

For the month of August, we reviewed ten FOIA requests, and provided advice and consultation to the following departments:

- Central Dispatch: eight
- Animal Control: one
- Prosecuting Attorney: one

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 July, we answered questions/prepared memos for the Board of Commissioners and various departments including:

- Administration
- Sheriff
- Parks and Recreation

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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 July, we represent the County in the following cases:

- *Grand Traverse County v. Joseph J. King et al.* On May 7<sup>th</sup>, we filed with the Circuit Court a complaint seeking reimbursement from 12 current and former inmates housed in the County Jail. Under the Prisoner Reimbursement to the County Act, MCL 801.81 et. seq., a County is permitted to file a lawsuit in Circuit Court seeking reimbursement from inmates, who are obligated to pay housing, medical and other expenses during incarceration. In total, we are seeking \$25,505.21 in reimbursement. In the future, we will plan on filing a lawsuit a month seeking inmate reimbursement. On July 28<sup>th</sup>, we appeared before Judge Rodgers requesting entry of default judgments against those Defendants who did not file an answer to the lawsuit. Judge Rodgers granted our request except as to one Defendant. The Court

gave that particular Defendant additional time to answer the complaint. This particular Defendant, John Steiner, has filed a motion to dismiss, claiming he is incompetent and thus lacks the capacity to be sued. We will file a response to his motion once the Court sets a hearing date.

- *Grand Traverse County v. Scott Reavely et al.* On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, we filed another lawsuit seeking reimbursement from 18 current and former jail inmates housed at the County Jail. In total, we are seeking \$45,335.67 from all the inmates named in the suit. On August 11<sup>th</sup>, Judge Rodgers held a hearing on our request for default judgments against most of the Defendants who failed to file an answer. Two defendants appeared at the hearing. One defendant agreed to a payment plan and a consent judgment has been agreed to by both parties. The other defendant, Mason Twocrow, stated he was willing to agree to a payment plan but subsequently failed to appear at the jail to sign a consent judgment or return any calls. We will re-file our motion for a default judgment against this Defendant.
- *Grand Traverse County v. Sarah Rose, et al.* On June 28<sup>th</sup>, we filed a third lawsuit seeking reimbursement from 18 current and former inmates. In total we are seeking \$51,715.19 from all the inmates named in the suit. In August, we began the process of seeking default judgments against Defendants who have not responded to the complaint. We expect the Court to set a hearing sometime in September.
- *Nick McCarthy v. Dave Benda, et al.* On August 13<sup>th</sup>, Mr. McCarthy filed a lawsuit in Grand Traverse County Circuit Court against the County Administrator, Traverse City Police Captain Jeff O'Brien, and DK Security. He alleges that he has suffered trauma and has been denied the right to fair trial due to the County Administrator's decision to have Mr. McCarthy monitored by DK security when he is at the Governmental Center or Circuit Court. We met with Mr. McCarthy, who is not being represented by an attorney, and requested that he dismiss the lawsuit against the Administrator, which he did. The parties have agreed that he will conduct his business without escort, but security will be called if he is disruptive of city or county staff.
- *Parcel 80 BIA Appeal.* (Request to place 12 acres of property into trust owned by the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians) We continue to await a decision from the Regional Director.
- *Parcel 82 BIA Appeal.* (Request to place 158 acres of property into trust owned by the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians) The appeal is still pending with the Bureau of Indian Affairs Appeals Board.

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 have submitted a proposed lease agreement to Grand Traverse Pavilions for their review.
- Bob Cooney met with regional officials to discuss possible changes to Michigan's sentencing guidelines.
- The Prosecutors Office has been working with Public Health Director on issues related to the Medical Examiner who has been unable to perform his duties for the past six months due to health reasons. Unfortunately, Dr. Houghton passed away a

couple of days ago and we continue to work with the Health Director on a long term solution toward filling the office.

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

- Household Hazardous Waste Collections: The Resource Recovery Department held the third Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Event of the year on August 14. Participants included 243 residents of Grand Traverse County and 10 county businesses and community organizations. A total of 38,093 pounds of hazardous or toxic substances were collected for recycling or safe disposal at the event.

The department would like to thank the Grand Traverse County Department of Public Works for again allowing Resource Recovery to take over their garage space for the event, and American Waste for donating recycling dumpsters. The Grand Traverse County Finance Department provided a staff member to assist with check-in and oversee donations and payments, and the Conservation District provided two additional check-in volunteers.

The fourth and final Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event of 2014 for Grand Traverse County will be taking place in Kingsley on Saturday, October 4. Appointments will be available beginning September 17 through the RecycleSmart Hotline (231-941-5555) or online at [RecycleSmart.info](http://RecycleSmart.info).

- 2014 RecycleSmart Kids - Garage Sale: Department Staff hosted the 2014 RecycleSmart Kids - Garage Sale event on Saturday, August 23, 2014 at the civic center. Nearly 30 booths were filled with resalable kids merchandise by entrepreneurial kids and their parents or guardians and over 200 shoppers participated throughout the event. The event also hosted informational booths including the Girl Scouts, Carter's Compost, and TBA Credit Union. Goodwill accepted donations of unsold items. Resource Recovery would like to thank the Grand Traverse Parks and Recreation Department for allowing the event to be held in the civic center and everyone involved for making the day a fun and successful event.