

**Observer Corps Summaries
November 2023**

Emmet County Commissioners

Date: 11/06/2023

Note: The meeting went smoothly, including the Public Hearing for Maple Block Flats. (During the public comment section of the hearing, there was some confusion as to whether or not the commissioners were to reply to questions, which normally is not done during public comment. The person commenting raised the concern about one of the commissioners needing to recuse himself due to conflict of interest. Commissioner David White responded, saying he received no benefit from his involvement in Northern Homes, and legal counsel also spoke to confirm that there was no cause for recusal. The result of the public hearing was that the Maple Block Flats Plan was approved.

Issues: None

Date: 11/19/2023

Notes: Nothing to report.

Issues: None
to watch

Petoskey City Council

Date: 11/06/2023

Notes: The City Manager reviewed the Planning Commission recommended two separate ordinances concerning short-term rentals including an ordinance regulating the licensing, application process and enforcement and a zoning ordinance where short-term rentals are allowed.

Issues
To watch: None

Date: 11/20/2023

Notes: Meeting lasted hours longer than normal as Mayor and Council worked out language for city policies on short term rentals et al.

Issues
To watch: None

Bear Creek Township:

Date: 11/01/2023
Notes: Nothing to report

Issues
To watch: None

Public Schools of Petoskey

Date: 11/16/2023
Notes: It appeared that some action items were discussed in special meetings. Minutes of those meetings are not posted on the website. They are available to see in print at the board office only. The minutes of 3 special meetings in October were approved at this regular meeting but not provided for the public along with the minutes of the regular October meeting.

Issues: The observer has not received an answer to her query about getting the board packet before the meeting.

Petoskey District Library

Date: 11/21/2023
Notes: Nothing to report

Issues
To watch; None

Harbor Springs City Council

Date: 11/06/2023
Notes: Discussion items included changes in the Short-Term Rental Ordinance affecting the number and deadlines for applications; cost estimates for alternative electric substation locations, and the idea of term limits for boards and commissions

Issues
To watch: Short term rentals because of relation to housing.
Term limits because of relation to representation positions.

Date: 11/20/2023
Notes: City Manager gave an orientation presentation to new and existing board members. There was discussion regarding term limits for board members. Discussion will continue at later meetings.

Issues**To watch:** None**Pellston Public Schools****Date:** 11/13/2023**Notes:** There was a presentation explaining how 31 aa grant funding will be used in the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The mental health funding will allow the district to continue the partnership with Dr. Sloane and school security funding will be used to replace interior door hardware throughout the district.**Issues****To Watch:** None**Board of Health****Date:** 11/07/2023**Notes:** Commissioners were mostly respectful, but Commissioner Rubingh got very forceful in insisting that COVID cannot be prevented, and that wastewater testing was a waste of taxpayer money. This had been discussed and approved in the budget meeting in September, but he wanted it revisited. After discussion and a motion to immediately stop funding for this, the motion failed in a 4-4 tie vote**Issues****To watch:** General public health prevention of disease (wastewater testing discussion) The discussion about defunding the wastewater testing was based on whether or not it was actually preventing any illness; it was Commissioner Rubingh's strong opinion that it was not and could not do so.

There were very few public comments. Chairman Hankins spoke at the very beginning to say that he will continue to open meetings with prayer, that "a number of commissioners want to start with prayer, and he is not sacrificing their right to pray" and that no one is required or forced to pray with them. He said he has had a lot of phone calls on the topic. During public comment Rev. Donahoe read a Native American prayer. Another speaker spoke in favor of prayer, During Commissioner Comments at the end of the meeting, Commissioner Ahrens shared the Masonic admonition to not speak of religion or politics within the lodge because these divide people. Eliminating divisiveness is important and this is not a church. Need to respect people. Commissioners Mason and Turnbull both spoke in favor of prayer.

Charlevoix County Commissioners**Date:** 11/08/2023**Notes:** Citizens in support of completion of Boyne City-Charlevoix bike trail Attended the meeting.

Issues

To Watch: None

Date: 11/21/2023

Notes: Continued discussion about funding for the non-motorized trail. The board would like the engineer on the project to attend a later meeting to answer questions about some of the unrealized costs for this project.

Issues: None

To Watch

Charlevoix City Council

Date: 11/06/2023

Notes: Nothing to report

Issues: None

To watch

Date: 11/20/2023

Notes: The board went into closed session to discuss Attorney-Client privileged communication and strategy for potential litigation.

Issues

To watch: None

Boyne City Council

Date: 11/14/2023

Notes: Observer was impressed with the amount of background information that was provided in the agenda packet. There were numerous opportunities for public comment as the council members moved through the agenda.

Issues

To watch: None

Date: 11/28/2023

Notes: The Mayor and other members of the council were quite diligent in discussing the importance of transparency and avoiding actual or perceived conflicts of interest as they conducted the agenda items.

Cheboygan County Commissioners

Date: 11/28/2023

Notes: Nothing to report

Issues

To watch: None