

Kalkaska County Board of Commissioners  
County Affairs Special Committee Meeting Minutes  
March 7, 2017  
(UNAPPROVED)

Meeting called to order by Committee Chair Fisher at 4:32 PM, Commissioner Chambers, Administration Building, 605 N Birch Street, Kalkaska, MI. Present Commissioners Kohn Fisher, Stuart McKinnon, Dave Comai and County Clerk Deborah Hill. Absent Commissioner Craig Crambell.

**Public Input:** None:

**Purpose of Meeting:**

Chair Fisher called for review of proposed Tri-County Court Shared Expense Agreement. Also present Court Administrators Mark Holston and Julie McDonald, Crawford County Controller Paul Compo and Circuit Court Judge Mertz.

Committee and attendees commenced to review proposed Tri-County Court Shared Expense Agreement regarding 'designated' employees who the three counties have shared expense with. Holston noted Crawford and Kalkaska signed a waiver for counsel to prepare proposed agreement for both counties, received 2-16-2017. McDonald noted: initially the agreement was reviewed as an internal policy with current budget, however, when reviewed it was determined it should be an agreement between counties; prior employee was on Kalkaska County's payroll, with the new Judge the new employee/secretary was already a Crawford County employee in Probate Court; history of shared employees with Circuit Court was a Judge (Allen) and secretary (Whitman) was on the Kalkaska County budget, a Judge and secretary was on the Crawford County budget and in Otsego the Law Clerk and the ADR Clerk; when the court discontinued the case evaluations several years ago that alleviated considerable ADR Clerk work (shared county work), that position then becoming the District Court Manager as well as ADR work; at that time the court began to set aside \$21,500 for other court shared expenses. Judge Mertz requested to review the Circuit Court budget when he became Chief Judge. Judge Mertz noted the need for transparency, communication regarding the tri county expenses and understanding the role of all court employees; with review of Judge Hunter residing in Crawford County he felt it was appropriate to review resources, efficiencies and work roles. Judge Mertz noted his desire to maintain a good working relationship with all three counties, provide transparency, efficiency and charge counties fairly. McDonald noted invoicing will go out to all three counties; budget process will be reviewed will all three counties; the intent is to expense all three counties based on caseload, etc. McDonald noted Kalkaska is at 28%, Crawford at 28% and Gaylord at 44% of caseload; it was determined that Kalkaska exceeds the 28% of expense which led to Judge Mertz reviewing the three budgets and shared expense. Discussion and review of drafts from counsel and proposed Crawford County, Fisher noted employee benefits may be of issue with disparity between counties and concern with changes if there are new judges, etc. Discussion, Compo noted it is a one year agreement, reviewed with annual budgets

and counties are joined by courts and Judges regardless, with shared expenses; each county approves by way of approving the budget. McKinnon inquired as to case load statistics; discussion. Discussion regarding the appropriate and fair expensing to each county based on caseloads; noted other counties still have to review/approve proposal. Compo noted the opportunity to evaluate correct shared county expenses. McDonald to provide revision of proposal with change of language to read 'line item' budget in paragraph nine as discussed.

**Public Input:** None

Meeting adjourned at 5:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

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Deborah Hill, Kalkaska County Clerk and  
Clerk of Board of Commissioners

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Stuart McKinnon, Chair of  
Kalkaska County Board of Commissioners

These minutes re not official until they are approved at the next Regular Board of Commissioners meeting.