



MINUTES
St. Clair County Board of Commissioners
Workshop

Board of Commissioners' Room
County Administrative Office Building, 2nd Floor
200 Grand River Avenue
Port Huron, MI 48060

January 30, 2025 at 6:00 PM

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Simasko called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Chairperson Simasko passed along the chair duties to Commissioner Fielitz for this workshop.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Pledge of Allegiance was lead by Commissioner Fielitz.

3. Roll Call

Present: Kerry Ange, Lisa Beedon, Robert Fielitz, David Rushing, Steve Simasko, Dave Vandenbossche

Absent: Joi Torello

4. Citizens Wishing to Address the Board

Sandra Tannehill - Wales Township
RE: EDA

Dawn Nowicki - Kimball Township
RE: EDA

Angela Defrain - Fort Gratiot Township
RE: EDA

Libby Prill - China Township
RE: How to co-exist

Tyler Meganck - Port Huron
RE: EDA and businesses

Rene' Ebner-Todd - Fort Gratiot Township

RE: Funding to underground and software development

Kevin Glass - Wales Township

RE: Focus

5. New Business

A. Proposed Solutions - Identified Issue with Current Economic Development Alliance Operation

Commissioner Fielitz stated the purpose of the workshop is to determine if St. Clair County should continue to use the services of the Economic Development Alliance (EDA) of St. Clair County and what form that service should look like.

Commissioner Fielitz anticipates three workshops needed.

The three workshops would consist of the following:

1. Any issues or problems with current arrangement held on January 9, 2025
2. Discuss potential ideas and solutions to improve upon how EDA is delivered in St. Clair County, today's workshop
3. Decide what solutions the Board wants to examine deeper and move to a Board of Commissioners meeting for possible action

Lengthy discussion among commissioners. A few key items discussed by commissioners follow:

Commissioner Ange read a letter from Ira Township Supervisor - James Endres Jr. in reference to the benefits of EDA.

Vice-Chairperson Rushing discussed the involvement in the EDA by the local communities. Vice-Chairperson Rushing would like to see the communities be contacted by the interested companies before the EDA. Vice-Chairperson Rushing briefly discussed NDA's. Vice-Chairperson Rushing clarified that he would never support firing the CEO of EDA or micro managing their finances.

Chairperson Simasko believes there are four general corrective measures that are necessary to align the practices of EDA with our citizens:

1. Adopt policy and procedure that give St. Clair County Board of Commissioners(BOC) oversight authority
2. Adopt policy and procedure that EDA honors and defers to the governing body of any township or municipality
3. EDA adopt a formal amendment to their bylaws that mandates the EDA to voluntarily comply with Freedom of Information Act(FOIA) and the Open Meetings Act
4. EDA adopt a formal amendment to their bylaws the prohibits EDA from

withholding information relative to economic development activities

Chairperson Simasko would like to have a memorandum of understanding instead of a contract with EDA.

Commissioner Fielitz mentioned letters he had received and highlighted a few points in each of the letters received from Greg Abbey - Cottrellville Township Supervisor, Dan Casey - CEO of EDA, and Carol Miller.

Commissioner Ange read into the record her response to Chairperson Simasko's email earlier this week in the interest of transparency.

Moved by Commissioner Ange, supported by Chairperson Simasko, to release Gary Fletcher's opinion on the Freedom of Information Act law, when Gary tells everybody that he agrees to do that. Carried - Voice Vote 6-0. Aye: Chairperson Simasko, Vice-Chairperson Rushing, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Fielitz, Commissioner Vandenbossche Nay: None

Dan Casey, CEO of EDA, addressed the Board. Mr. Casey addressed a couple incorrect assumptions. EDA does have a protocol to work with communities on projects. The EDA does not force non disclosure agreements (NDA's) on communities. The company that approaches the EDA will ask if the community will sign an NDA. At that point, the EDA only helps facilitate between the two parties. Mr. Casey stated that most projects don't require an NDA but there has been a few more in the last few years.

Mr. Casey submitted a letter to the Board of solutions the Executive Board of the EDA could agree on that offers a framework for a future agreement.

Commissioner Fielitz opened the floor for short public comment. Libby Prill and Kevin Glass addressed the board.

Commissioner Fielitz closed the meeting stating the purpose of these workshops is to restore public trust in the EDA.

6. Adjournment

Moved by Chairperson Simasko, supported by Commissioner Vandenbossche, to adjourn at 7:30. Carried - Voice Vote 6-0. Aye: Chairperson Simasko, Vice-Chairperson Rushing, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Fielitz, Commissioner Vandenbossche Nay: None