



MINUTES
St. Clair County Board of Commissioners

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

May 21, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Moment of Silence, Prayer or Personal Reflection

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Simasko called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Pledge of Allegiance was lead by Chairperson Simasko.

3. Roll Call

Present: Steve Simasko, Lisa Beedon, Joi Torello, David Rushing, Dave Vandebossche, Kerry Ange, Paul Zeller

Absent: None

4. Additions/Deletions/Changes to the Agenda

None

5. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Commissioner Beedon, seconded by Commissioner Rushing, to approve the agenda as presented. Carried - Voice Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandebossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

6. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Moved by Commissioner Torello, seconded by Commissioner Rushing, to approve and file the minutes of the 04/16/2026 Commission Meeting and the 05/07/2026 Standing Committee Meeting. Carried- Voice Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing,

Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay:
None

A. 04-16-2026 Commission Meeting

B. 05-07-2026 Standing Committee Meetings

7. Proclamations

None

8. Consent Agenda

Moved by Commissioner Ange, seconded by Commissioner Vandenbossche, to approve items 8A through 8F on the Consent Agenda. Carried - Voice Vote 7-0.
Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

A. Summary Budget to Actual Report — April 2026

B. American Rescue Plan Spending Report — April 2026

C. Court Recording Solution Renewal

D. Valvoline Renewal

E. CivicPlus Renewal

F. Title Check Renewal

9. Reports of Standing and Special Committees

Commissioner Ange - Armed Forces Luncheon - Oral

Meetings with Melissa Miller, Animal Control Director - Oral

Commissioner Beedon — CMH & Council on Aging Awards Ceremony - Oral

CSCB Meeting - Oral

Commissioner Rushing — Advisory Board of Health - Oral

Community Health Assessment — Oral

Commissioner Simasko - Demand regarding defamatory statements made — Oral

A.

Demand Regarding Defamatory Statements Made By Ms. Laura Wilhelm Burszek at 05/07/2026 St Clair County Board of Commissioner Commission meeting

10. Citizens Wishing to Address the Board

Jim Casha - Ontario, Canada

RE: Michigan's Child Welfare

Rene Smit MD - Fort Gratiot, MI

RE: Appointment of Dr Nevin

Bill Davis - Port Huron, MI

RE: Chief Medical Officer Dr Nevin

Sharon Kortas
RE: Health Department

Eileen Tesch - Algonac, MI
RE: CMH

Carol Miller
RE: CSCB

Laura Wilhelm-Bruzek
RE: Defamation

Tracy Birgy - Marysville, MI
RE: Previous Meeting

Libby Prill - China, MI
RE: Slander & Misinformation RE: Health Department & Animal Control

Chavenia Hernandez - Columbus, MI
RE: Animal Control

Rachel Walch
RE: Animal Control

Susan Atwater - Port Huron MI
RE: Ordinance

Tonya - Port Huron MI
RE: Animals

Courtney Protz-Sanders, Michigan Pet Alliance
RE: Animal Control

Carrie Genoff - St. Clair Twp MI
RE: Animal Ordinance

Dawn Fulk - Port Huron Twp MI
RE: Civil discourse

Dave Allison
RE: Governmental Oversight

11. Unfinished Business

None

12. New Business

A. Approval of County Disbursements — April 2026

Moved by Commissioner Rushing, seconded by Commissioner Ange, to approve the April 2026 County Disbursements in the amount of \$24,212,219.99. Carried - Roll Call Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

B. Community Services Coordinating Body

Moved by Commissioner Beedon, seconded by Commissioner Vandenbossche, to approve the payment of \$7,500 for Community Services Coordinating Body dues. Carried - Roll Call Vote 5-2. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing

C. Comprehensive Organizational Assessment and Staffing Plan - Rehmann Robson

Moved by Commissioner Zeller, seconded by Commissioner Ange, to approve the agreement with Rehmann Robson in the amount of \$40,000 to conduct a thorough assessment on the St. Clair County Library System. Carried - Roll Call Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

D. Marine City Courtroom Renovation

Moved by Commissioner Vandenbossche, seconded by Commissioner Ange, to approve the proposal with DLZ to provide architectural services to modernize the Marine City District Court courtroom with a not-to-exceed amount of \$39,000. Carried - Roll Call Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

E. Lexipol - Training and Records Management Software Renewal - Sheriff's Department

Moved by Commissioner Ange, seconded by Commissioner Vandenbossche, to approve the Lexipol Software Renewal for the Sheriff's Department for a term of 04/01/26 through 03/31/29 in the amount of \$30,738.75. Carried - Roll Call Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

F. AXON Camera System - Sheriff's Office

Moved by Commissioner Torello, seconded by Commissioner Vandenbossche, to approve the purchase of an upgraded Axon camera system including body cameras and in car cameras in the amount of \$653,199. Carried - Roll Call Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

G. Juvenile Intervention Unit/Day Treatment Night Watch Security Camera Server Replacement - Conti

Moved by Commissioner Rushing, seconded by Commissioner Ange, to approve the purchase with Conti in the amount of \$43,778.19 for the new security camera server located at the Juvenile Intervention Unit/Day Treatment Night Watch building. Carried - Roll Call Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

H. Intervention Center Kitchen Floor Resurfacing - Michigan Specialty Coatings

Moved by Commissioner Beedon, seconded by Commissioner Vandenbossche, to

approve the quote from Michigan Specialty Coatings for resurfacing of the Intervention Center kitchen floor in the amount of \$43,970.13. Carried - Roll Call Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

I. Jail Management System Upgrade

Moved by Commissioner Vandenbossche, seconded by Commissioner Beedon, to approve the agreement with Core xRM for the Jail Management System upgrade, implementation and support in the amount of \$51,877.50 for a term of May 2026 - April 2027. Carried - Roll Call Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

J. Resolution 26-13 Animal Control Ordinance

Moved by Commissioner Zeller, seconded by Commissioner Rushing, to adopt Resolution 26-13 the Animal Control Ordinance. Discussion followed.

Moved by Commissioner Torello, seconded by Commissioner Ange, to table the motion and set it on for final action at the Committee Meeting in two weeks. Carried - Voice Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

K. Landfill - Gas Collection and Control Systemn Phase XI Expansion - Ryan Incorporated Central

Moved by Commissioner Ange, seconded by Commissioner Rushing, to approve the contract with Ryan Incorporated Central for the completion of the Phase XI Gas Collection and Control System Expansion at the Landfill, in the amount of \$1,133,284.50 plus a 15% contingency of \$169,993 for a total of \$1,303,277. Carried - Roll Call Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

L. SEMCOG Planning Assistance Grant Application – Trails Plan

Moved by Commissioner Torello, seconded by Commissioner Vandenbossche, to approve the SEMCOG Planning Assistance Program grant application in the amount of \$36,832.50 for the update to the 2019 St. Clair County Trails Strategic Plan. Carried - Roll Call Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

M. Friends of the St. Clair River 2026-2027 Stewardship Services Agreement

Moved by Commissioner Rushing, seconded by Commissioner Torello, to approve the agreement with the Friends of the St. Clair River for stewardship services for Parks and Recreation for the period 4/1/26 through 3/31/27 in the amount of \$10,000. Carried - Roll Call Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

N. 2026 General Fund Budget Amendments

Moved by Commissioner Beedon, seconded by Commissioner Torello, to approve the May 21, 2026 General Fund budget amendments. Carried - Voice Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

O. Resolution 26-12 Opposing State Preemption of Local Zoning Authority

Moved by Commissioner Zeller, seconded by Commissioner Rushing, to adopt Resolution 26-12 opposing State preemption of local zoning authority. Discussion followed. Carried - Voice Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

P. City of Port Huron IT Services Agreement Amendment

Moved by Commissioner Vandenbossche, seconded by Commissioner Torello, to approve the amendment of the revenue contract with the City of Port Huron and St. Clair County IT Department. Carried - Voice Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

Q. Contract - Administrator/Controller - T. Hull

Moved by Commissioner Beedon, seconded by Commissioner Rushing, to appoint Thomas Hull as County Administrator/Controller for the remainder of a 3 year term ending December 31st, 2028. Discussion followed. Carried - Voice Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

R. Resolution 26-16 Imposing 2026 Summer Property Tax Levy

Moved by Commissioner Rushing, seconded by Commissioner Zeller, to adopt Resolution 26-16 Imposing the 2026 Summer Property Tax Levy Carried - Voice Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandenbossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

13. Administrator's Report

The May 2026 Administrator's Report is included in the Board of Commissioner Packet.

Administrator Hull touched on a few key points from the May 2026 Administrator's Report:

- Spoke about the Senior Millage Social Media Campaign
- Attended the Rural Small Towns Summit on May 19th where municipalities gather to discuss economic development
- Strategic Planning Software — Working on determining priorities
- Working on Airport Fee Struction Evaluation. When complete, it will be

brought to the Board

Moved by Commissioner Rushing, seconded by Commissioner Ange, to accept and file the Administrator's Report. Carried - Voice Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandebossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

A. May 2026

14. Miscellaneous Business

Commissioner Ange - A warm thank you to the Commissioners for flowers sent to her mother's wake.

Commissioner Simasko - Addressed the comments made by Dawn Fulk in regard to Carolyn Richards.

Commissioner Beedon - Spoke about CSCB and Tom Hull being a member of the steering committee.

15. Receive and File Packets and all Information Present

Moved by Commissioner Torello, seconded by Commissioner Vandebossche, to receive and file packets that were sent to Commissioners, packets at their places and any other information presented. Carried - Voice Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandebossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

16. Adjournment

Moved by Commissioner Torello, seconded by Commissioner Rushing, to adjourn at 7:40 p.m. Carried - Voice Vote 7-0. Aye: Commissioner Simasko, Commissioner Beedon, Commissioner Torello, Commissioner Rushing, Commissioner Vandebossche, Commissioner Ange, Commissioner Zeller Nay: None

Angie Waters
St. Clair County Clerk\Register

Item Cover Sheet

Agenda Item: Demand Regarding Defamatory Statements made by Ms. Laura Wilhelm Burszek at 05 07 2026 St Clair County Board of Commissioner Commission meeting

Item Category: Old Business

Requesting Department: Steven L. Simasko, County Board Chairman

Introduction and Background:

Re: Demand Regarding Defamatory Statements 05 07 2026

At the county commission meeting last week, Laura Wilhelm-Burszek made false statements concerning me personally and regarding alleged actions by me in my position as an elected St. Clair County Commissioner. Her Defamatory Statements have caused, or are likely to cause, serious harm, including but not limited to damage to my personal and/or professional reputation; loss or potential loss of business, clients, customers, or employment opportunities; emotional distress, stress, and disruption of personal and professional relationships; the need to spend time and resources responding to or mitigating the impact of her statements and lastly a diminished reputation as an elected public official. I have sent Laura Wilhelm-Burszek a demand that she retract the false statements relating to me identified below that were made by her during public comment at the St Clair County Board of Commissioners Meeting held on Thursday May 7th 2026. I provided her with a transcript of her comments prepared by a certified court reporter. The defamatory statements as they appear in the official record are as follows;

#1 P#2 L17 thru L 23; "This past Tuesday Ms. Wonner was in court for her preliminary examination and I was in attendance. At this time I witnessed her defense attorney, David Black, tell the Judge he had already worked out a deal on the side with Commissioner Simasko, basically telling the Judge he just needed her to sign off on what he had already worked out."

#2 P#2 L24 thru P#3 L 5; "Judge Armstrong was clearly taken aback by the audacity of his statement and responded, "He doesn't speak for me, " meaning Commissioner Simasko. She then threatened to raise Wonner's bond and finished with, "I suggest no one speaks for me." This is a blatant overreach and abuse of power by a Commissioner trying to influence an ongoing court case."

#3 P#3 L23 thru P#4 L 1 "From what has been stated in open court, Mr. Black admits that an agreement had been discussed and agreed upon with Commissioner Simasko regarding the return of these animals."

#4 P#4 L23 thru P#4 L 16; "Our Commissioners should have no influence over active legal cases, nor should they be engaging with defense attorneys or making promises about legal cases within this county. Commissioner, Commissioner Simasko surely knows better."

When Laura Wilhelm-Burszek made the false defamatory statements last Thursday evening I obviously immediately knew were false. My intent here is to address her behavior in a way that protects and restores my reputational interests affected by the injurious falsehoods she uttered. I have now notified her that her statements were completely false, and I provided her with an opportunity to retract them as required by law. I included this as an official agenda item in hopes of dissuading her and others from repeating these false statements. In support of the falsity of her statements, upon request I can provide the following factual information that can easily be verified by anyone interested in the truth of the matter. I have a copy of the transcript of Laura Wilhelm-Burszek's defamatory statements, I have a copy of the official court record in the matter she referred in her defamatory statements, I contacted Mike Wendling, the County Prosecutor and Natalie Burns the Assistant Prosecutor who attended the hearing in question and the Defense Attorney David Black that she referred to in her defamatory statements and they each independently confirmed that my name was never mentioned either on the record or at the judge's bench before, during or after the court hearing Laura Wilhelm-Burszek referred to in her defamatory statements. I have been advised by those with personal knowledge

identified above that the person that had been in negotiations with Attorney Black about a bond issue and return of property in the criminal case you referred to was not me but rather Chief Assistant Prosecutor Stephen M. Guiliat whom I also had never spoken to about the matter. I have made the following specific demands for retraction by Laura Wilhelm-Burszek;

Regarding statement #1 above I demanded that she retract the false statement that she heard Attorney Black say that he had a deal with me relating to his client. That was never said by Attorney Black as his dealings were with the prosecutor's office not me. He will confirm that I have never had any contact with him whatsoever on the case she referred to in that false defamatory statement she made. I demanded that her retraction should be in public comment during the Board of Commissioners meeting on May 14, 2026. In her comments she must state the comments about my alleged involvement regarding Attorney Black supposedly saying he had a deal with me never in fact occurred. In her retraction she must state she is retracting her comments about my alleged involvement in making a deal regarding the Wonner case and that her comments were false.

Regarding statement #2 above I demanded that she retract the false statement that Judge Armstrong ever referred to me at the hearing in question in any manner be it personally, as a licensed attorney or as an elected county commissioner or board chair. The official transcript of the proceedings in question contains no reference and the parties present at the judge's bench off the record will confirm that her statement was false. Her retraction should be in public comment during the Board of Commissioners meeting on May 21st, 2026. In her comments she must state that Judge Armstrong never mentioned Steven Simasko or referred to Steven Simasko in any way personally, as a licensed attorney or as an elected county commissioner during court proceedings on the Wonner case and that her comments in that regard were false.

Regarding statement #3 above, I demanded that she retract the false statement that Attorney Black stated in court that an agreement had been discussed and agreed upon with Steven Simasko personally regarding the return of property in possession of animal control belonging to his client. The official transcript of the proceeding in question contains no such reference "in open court" and the parties present both in court and at the judge's bench off the record will confirm that her statement is false. Her retraction should be in public comment during the Board of Commissioners meeting on May 21st, 2026. In her comments she must state that Attorney Black never stated in court in the Wonner case that an agreement had

been discussed and agreed upon with Steven Simasko regarding the return of property in possession of animal control belonging to his client and that her comments in that regard were false.

Regarding statement #4 above, I demanded that she retract the false statement suggesting that Commissioner Simasko had abused the power of my elected office by exerting influence over a pending criminal case by making an agreement or promises to an attorney of record in a pending criminal case. Her retraction should be in public comment during the Board of Commissioners meeting on May 21st, 2026. In her comments she must state that Commissioner Steven Simasko never abused the power of his elected office by exerting influence over a pending criminal case by making an agreement or promises to an attorney of record in a pending criminal case and that her comments in that regard were false.

For the record the accusations of Laura Wilhelm-Burszek toward me are patently false. She is either a very poor liar or made derogatory statements with reckless disregard for the truth. Both of which are actionable transgressions under Michigan law. Laura Wilhelm-Burszek accused me publicly at a board meeting of abuse of authority and committing obstruction of justice which is a criminal offense under the Michigan Penal Code and is considered to be defamation per se allowing me to seek exemplary damages including attorney fees if she refuses to retract your defamatory statements within a reasonable time after receiving this notice to retract. MCL 600.2911(2)(b). I further demanded that she remove all false defamatory statements from all forms of social or platforms where she may have also made them and provide me with proof of same along with proof of appropriate correction or retraction and otherwise address the harm that she has already caused. I demanded that she immediately cease and desist from making, publishing, sharing, or repeating the defamatory statements, or any other false or misleading statements about me or my business, in any form (online, in writing, or verbally) and that she remove, or cause to be removed, all posts, comments, reviews, messages, videos, or other content containing Defamatory Statements from any social media platform, groups, forums, or channels, websites or social media page

If Laura Wilhelm-Burszek does not comply with the demands set out above, I will consider all options available to protect my rights and reputation. These options may include, without limitation: seeking advice from an experienced attorney regarding defamation and related claims; requesting that platforms or service providers remove defamatory content; pursuing legal remedies, which may include claims for damages, injunctive relief, and

recovery of costs and legal fees as permitted by law. While I hope that legal action will not be necessary, I am prepared to take further steps if this matter is not resolved promptly.

Regardless of whatever decision Laura Wilhelm-Burszek makes with respect to my demand for a retraction I feel it necessary to address her defamatory statements as an agenda item at a public meeting of our board to make a record of my formal rebuke of her behavior. Her behavior was egregious enough that it warrants immediate action to protect myself and other elected officials from malicious falsehoods uttered at public meetings and in social media. I do not want to chill socially important speech such as civil discourse and public comment at board meetings, but we must address ignorant hurtful comments or similar malicious attacks on others, including elected officials when they violate the rights of others.

Sincerely,

Steven L. Simasko

3024 Commerce Drive,

Fort Gratiot, Ni. 48059

810-385-9555