

# PERSONNEL / WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

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## MEMBERS

*Terry Collins, Ralph Tillotson  
Committee of the Whole*

## MEETING LOCATION

Chambers  
301 N. Main Street  
Adrian, MI 49221

**Minutes:** Tuesday, March 7, 2023 – 10:11 a.m.

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**Present:** Commissioners Collins, Bales, Bolton, Jenkins-Arno, Krasny, Martis, Stimpson, Tillotson, and Van Doren

**Also Present:** Kim Murphy, John Gillooly, Gordon Gauss, Lynn Punnett, Mike Clement (TalkBack), Deb Comstock, Jenny Escott, Carolyn Bater, Bethany Teague (& guest), Shannon, Elliott, Michelle Gray, Ian Wendt (WLEN), Ben Ricker, Craig Tanis, Jen Ambrose, Matt Turgeon, Tracy Stace, Rebecca Borton, Mary Lowe (the Daily Telegram), and Michael Simon from Zency.

## I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*Motion by Martis, seconded by Bales, to approve the minutes of the March 7, 2023, meeting.  
Motion carried.*

## II. PERSONNEL BUSINESS

**A. Employment Changes:** Personnel changes were available for review.

**B. County Administrator Employment Contract:** The Board of Commissioners had postponed a motion to rescind the Administrator's contract to the March 7, 2023, Personnel/Ways and Means meeting, after selecting corporate counsel and corporate counsel having the opportunity to review said contract. Atty. John Gillooly (Corporate Counsel) has provided the Commissioner's with a written confidential opinion on the matter.

*Motion by Van Doren, seconded by Martis, to rescind the motion to rescind the employment contract between the County Administrator and the Board of Commissioners. Motion carried.*

Commissioner Stimpson requested that the Administrator bring back a total cost associated with this issue.

**C. Department on Aging Request-Deputy Director:** Cari Rebotarro reviewed a request for a new position of Deputy Department on Aging Director. This position would be pay grade NU7539, at \$51,013; funding is available within the Department on Aging approved budget.

*Motion by Bolton, seconded by Bales, to recommend approval of the new Department on Aging Deputy Director; NU7539. Motion carried.*

- D. Other Personnel Business:** Kim introduced Jen Ambrose, the new Marketing and Communications person.

### **III. WAYS AND MEANS BUSINESS**

- A. Finance Reports:** Administrator Murphy reported the initial audit meeting will be held next week with the actual audit taking place at the beginning of April. She reminded the committee that the finance reports are not exact as the process continues to adjust prior year expenses and revenues. She went on to review points of interest in the General Fund Income Statement and the Fund Equity Change Report.
- B. Quarterly Allotment of Appropriations:** The second quarterly allotment was submitted for consideration.

*Motion by Bolton, seconded by Van Doren, to recommend adoption of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Allotment of Appropriations by resolution [RES#2023-003]. Motion carried.*

#### **C. Committee Referrals/Recommendations:**

**IT / Equalization Committee:** The IT/Equalization Committee has referred the consideration of the elimination of the Zencity contract.

*Motion by Commissioner Krasny to terminate the Zencity Contract with Lenawee County, seconded by Jenkins-Arno. The following discussion:*

Michael Simon from Zencity reviewed the services provided by Zencity and how local governments use Zencity to be more receptive to public comments. No private data is collected; there were 40,000 public comments regarding Lenawee County government this month and Zencity provides an insight to those comments.

Commissioner Jenkins offered questions that were provided to her:

How does the software determine who is a Lenawee County resident. Michael explained that Zencity guesstimates where to send surveys with an 80% accuracy, the location is then confirmed when the survey taker enters their zip code in the process. Zencity does not identify location of comments on media platforms, but rather comments relating to a specific topic, like a park name, city name, etc.

While Zencity is collecting information relative to Lenawee County, what other personal information is collected? Michael advises that no personal information is collected. He clarified that surveys will ask for zip codes, age by group, and race that are provided voluntarily by survey takers.

Did the County publish a notice on its own social media platforms? Jen Ambrose confirmed that there is Social Media Policy posted on County Social Media site.

Does Zencity implement data retention rules and what is the retention? Zencity access only public information, it is not a retention platform; it is more of a pass through of information.

Commissioner Krasny asked about how Zencity identifies sectors and demographic trends. Michael explained that as it relates to the survey side of Zencity, markers such as zip codes and other questions are asked of those taking the surveys. The social media is not intended to be a representative sample of Lenawee county residents, but rather augment other forms of resident input. Simply another form of public comment. The surveys are collected and compared to the US census to gather a sample.

Commissioner Krasny believes that surveys taken through social media do not provide a complete representation sample of our community; there is a large portion of our community that does not use social media platforms.

Although Zencity's surveys provide a representative sample of the county, Michael clarified that Zencity Organic should be used as an additional tool to collective input from residents.

Some Commissioners expressed their concerns and frustrations.

Commissioner Bolton read a letter in support of Zencity. Commissioner Bolton believes that Zencity offers a valuable tool and suggested an alternative provider be considered at the end of the contract.

Commissioner Van Doren is open to exploring other service options.

Commissioner Martis requested that the minutes reflect his opposition to the word racism being used by him for this topic.

Administrator Murphy explained how information gathered by Zencity was invaluable during the COVID pandemic, information gathered from both Zencity and the Commissioners was used during the ARPA fund distributions. Zencity has been used to obtain public comments and has been used as an additional information gathering tool. Surveys are completed on a volunteer basis, and there has been no personal data gathering; the County has been using this technology to gather public comments since early 2021.

Administrator Murphy stated she understands that commissioners may feel disconnected from Zencity information. She stated that last fall, the IT Committee began getting samples of some of the Zencity reports. She also commended and encouraged commissioners to continue meeting with their constituents, township, village, and city officials, as all forms of communication should be explored when addressing our citizens.

Commissioner Collins offered the following opinion:

- Issues addressed are not with Zencity, but rather what happens with that information.
- Nothing is used by Zencity that is not public information.
- We are better served to gather information by attending a meeting in public; however, Zencity is an additional tool to hear public comments.
- Concerns regarding Zencity being an Israeli company should have no bearing.
- Data mining is being conducted all the time, it is how advertising is now done.
- Social media is a public platform. There are no rights, nor should there be any expectation that anything posted on social media is to be kept confidential.
- Are we getting our bang for the buck?
- If we are unhappy with the reporting efforts, we need to address that in-house.

Commissioner Tillotson added that the County made a commitment and should stand to that commitment.

Commissioner Collins noted that the contract expires in Jan. 2024 and the termination requires that the balance be paid in full.

Commissioner Krasny added that just because other communities are using Zencity doesn't mean that it's right for Lenawee County. He also questioned the computer system used by Zencity and suggested that there is the possibility that other information may be being withheld.

*Motion by Comm. Krasny to immediately terminate the Zencity contract with Lenawee County, seconded by Jenkins-Arno. Roll call vote. Yeas (4): Krasny, Jenkins-Arno, Martis, and Van Doren; Nays (5): Collins, Stimpson, Tillotson, Bales, and Bolton. Motion failed.*

#### **D. Other Ways & Means Business**

No other business.

#### **IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

There were no additional items for the Consent Agenda. Action items approved unanimously at this meeting will be placed on the Board of Commissioners Consent Agenda unless requested to be removed.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Deb Comstock, Adrian: provided comment on actions taken today.

Bethany Teague, Blissfield: provided comments on actions taken today,

**VI. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Martis commended the discussions taken today.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion by Tillotson, seconded by Bolton, to adjourn the meeting at 11:47 p.m. Motion carried.*

KLM/rdb