

## **THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW . . .**

**Monday, May 11, 2020**

This Thursday, May 14, the Board of Commissioners will take-up the enclosed resolution authorizing the county administrator to purchase the equipment necessary to live stream Board of Commissioners (BOC) meetings.

The current COVID 19-related restrictions on gathering more than a few people in one room has opened the entire matter of allowing our citizens to see and hear our meetings when in person attendance is not possible.

The neighboring counties of Barry, Kalamazoo and Kent already provide some form of live broadcasting or streaming of their BOC meetings. In addition, the nearby counties of Calhoun and Muskegon do the same as do many cities and numerous churches.

From time to time, I have heard the comments of citizens who would like to attend and observe BOC meetings but because our meeting schedule is during the day (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays at 9am and 1pm) cannot attend. Even though we advertise and hold two evening meetings a year, citizen attendance is even lower.

I thought you should know of this proposal in advance of the BOC's consideration. Please don't hesitate to contact me should you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Jim Storey, Chairperson

Allegan County Board of Commissioners: 616-848-9767.

Not prepared, produced or mailed at taxpayer expense.

S T A T E O F M I C H I G A N

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF ALLEGAN

**INFORMATION SERVICES—PURCHASE AND INSTALL AUDIO/VIDEO EQUIPMENT  
AND SOFTWARE FOR LIVE STREAMING MEETINGS**

**WHEREAS**, Allegan County is a geographically large entity with a modest-sized population spread through twenty-four (24) townships, nine (9) cities and two (2) villages; and

**WHEREAS**, modern business and household schedules may make it challenging for citizens to attend to attend, observe, and participate in meetings of their elected board; and

**WHEREAS**, transparency and availability of the Board's operations may increase community engagement ratings in local government which, as reported through the recent citizen survey, demonstrated twenty percent (20%) reported having attended a local public meeting and nine percent (9%) reported having watched a local public meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, many Michigan county boards of commissioners broadcast or live stream its meetings including the bordering counties of Kent, Kalamazoo, and Barry; and

**WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 public health emergency requiring social distancing and shelter-in-place orders has brought to light barriers to attending traditional, in-person public meetings necessary for the conduct of the public's business; and

**WHEREAS**, the advance of technology in recent years has yielded cost-effective methods for video-audio streaming of Board of Commissioner meetings with the residents its members are elected to represent and serve.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** the Allegan County Board of Commissioners authorizes the purchase and installation of equipment and software for the purpose of live streaming Board of Commissioners and other County meetings emanating from the Board's chambers delivering quality video and audio that enables residents to clearly see and hear the meetings; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** the Board directs the County Administrator to proceed with the acquisition of said equipment in a manner which will include an initial timely installation with the ability to phase in progressive system improvements and will not interfere with other projects already approved for 2020; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the County Administrator shall at least monthly report on the progress of the acquisition and installation; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** concurrent with system deployment, the Board shall propose a live streaming and recording policy in coordination and consultation with the County Administrator, other elected officials, and county residents generally; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Executive Director of Finance is authorized to perform the necessary capital budget adjustments and fund balance transfers necessary to fund this initial project phase not to exceed \$10,000; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Board Chairperson and/or the County Administrator are authorized to sign any necessary documentation on behalf of the County.

DRAFT