



the COUNTY of SHIAWASSEE established in 1822



A direct and open communication between the Shiawassee Board of Commissioners and the community.

Commissioners' Corner

Outgoing Commissioner, Dan McMaster of District 2 has served on the Board for two terms. Though we won't have Dan on our Board in 2021, we know, "there will be more to come..." Thank-you Dan! A worthy read, Commissioner McMaster's Farewell letter is featured on page 3.

County Events

Peace, Comfort, & Joy! The beloved tradition of Christmas at the Courthouse will resurrect in 2021. This year, we wish you holiday comfort and connection in spirit. The magic of the season remains!

Spotlight on: RAVE

Make sure you get the call! RAVE Mobile Safety is a FREE alert system for Shiawassee residents. Emergency notifications come to you directly via text or email. It takes just a moment to sign-up for this service that may save a life! Find the sign-up link at shiawassee.net under Courts & Law, Central Dispatch, then click RAVE on the left

Where Your Tax Dollars Went

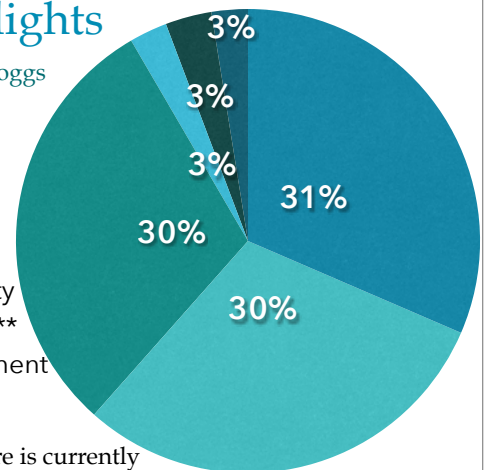
As your Board of Commissioners' we want to communicate with you and lend clarity to all that we have carried out in 2020. What a year it was!

As elected representatives of our individual District's we recognize our duty to develop a budget that betters our community. We want Shiawassee County to be a great place to reside, work, and enjoy. Shiawassee is all of our home and we want to see it thrive!

Here are the Highlights

County Administrator, Dr. Brian Boggs gives the high points of 2020 and 2021 finances

- All Other Government*
Courts
Sheriff/Jail/911
Drains At-Large & Drain Facility
Mental Health & Health Dept.**
Parks & Community Development



"Through the leadership of the County Board of Commissioners, there is currently a budget for 2021 with revenues of \$17, 949, 376 and expenses of \$17, 698, 968. This means that we are currently \$250,000 of revenue over expenses.

In the 2020 budget year, the Board of Commissioners budgeted to expend 1.4 million dollars of delinquent tax money to fill in budget gaps, however through strategic changes and additional revenue opportunities the Commissioners did not have to use said funds.

Further, Shiawassee County Board of Commissioners will not have to use any delinquent tax funds to balance the 2021 projected budget. This will allow the county to begin strengthening its financial position."

More financial information can be found at shiawassee.net

*This includes any department not listed below (Clerk, Treasurer, Register of Deeds, etc.)
**This represents the county's contribution, not the department's budget as a whole.
Our contribution is the amount necessary to access state funding.



*Not pictured: County Commissioner Marlene Webster

County Government 101

The Board of Commissioners are leaders of County Government in Shiawassee County. Seven Commissioners represent Shiawassee County, each serving a two year term. The primary purpose of the Commissioners is to establish the annual budget, along with reviewing and approving the annual budgets of elected officials: *Clerk, Drain Commissioner, Prosecutor, Treasurer, Register of Deeds, Surveyor, Sheriff, and Judges*. As part of their fiscal responsibilities, the Board of Commissioners is responsible for developing policies and procedures to maintain accountability and organization. The Board levies property taxes, sets fees, sells bonds, and borrows. They are also approve contracts, grant agreements, and personnel matters, such as collective bargaining agreements. County government relies on the Commissioners to oversee multiple departments including Health, Buildings & Grounds, Community Development, and County Parks. The Board of Commissioners is responsible for appointing citizen members to various Committees in addition to selecting a County Administrator to supervise day-to-day operations.

Setting the Record Straight

Per Diem

There has been much misrepresentation about the Commissioner’s and Citizen Per Diem Wage Schedule. This Per Diem Schedule has not been adjusted since the 1970s and citizens were not willing to serve on these boards at \$25 for two to three-hour long meetings. In an effort to increase public engagement, the Board of Commissioners raised these fees for everyone on these citizen boards. This includes the Commissioners who serve on them as well. It would be unreasonable to pay a citizen \$50 and a commissioner who also serves on that board only \$25.

The alleged 12% increase is inaccurate – it just does not add up. Beginning January 1, 2021 commissioners will be entitled to reimbursement of \$50 for attending committee and board meetings, an increase from the current \$25 rate that has been in place since the 1970s for committee meetings, and \$45 for board meetings. Commissioners are assigned to committees by the chairperson, and serve on one standing committee meeting on Mondays, one standing committee on Tuesdays, the Committee of the Whole on Wednesdays, and full board meetings on Thursdays. Under the current reimbursement policy, commissioners receive a total of \$120 per diem for meeting attendance; after January 1, this will rise to a total of \$200, an \$80 raise. With a sole exception, all commissioners only apply for reimbursement for attending (1) those county committees they are assigned to, as well as (2) other meetings they attend for county business, e.g. township meetings, sub-committee meetings, meetings with county departments, etc. The sole exception is one commissioner who applies for reimbursement for all county committees she attends, even those she has not been assigned to and for which she is not entitled to reimbursement. Ironically, this sole commissioner is also the one complaining about the \$25 per diem raises.

Shiawassee County Legal Counsel, Ryan Painter, JD

On Thursday November 19, 2020 the Board of Commissioners voted 6-1 to contract Attorney Ryan Painter to handle the county’s legal needs. There has been much misinformation about this in the community. Under the direction of the Board of Commissioners, bids are not required for professional services. The Commissioners recognize that the concept of “the lowest bid” is not always in our best interest as we obtain contracts for professional services. We evaluate based on merit, rather than cost only.

The Board of Commissioners solicited Ryan Painter to fulfill the county’s legal necessities because of his qualifications and experience. There was no previous relationship between the Board of Commissioners and Mr. Painter. As the Commissioners evaluated our government’s legal needs and defined the nature of service we were seeking, we determined that we preferred counsel that was more present in our county. We also wanted an attorney who was willing and able to prioritize our county, delivering timely and expert counsel. Specifically, we solicited for an attorney who had the capacity to respond to our inquiries and needs quickly, who would be available for in-person meetings, and who could produce high quality documents upon request. Ryan Painter’s credentials rose to the top. His career is robust, and his current status and capacity were in line with what Shiawassee County needed. See page 4 of this newsletter to learn more about Attorney Painter’s education, experience, and affiliations.

Law Suits Against the County

A single open meeting violation law suit was brought against the Treasurer Selection Committee in 2019. The committee was comprised of Caroline Wilson, Judge Tommy Dignan, and former Prosecutor Deana Finnegan (no commissioner was involved in the law suit). The Shiawassee Board of Commissioners resolved the matter in June 2020 by paying out \$500 to the complainant, the maximum amount a complainant may receive for an open meeting violation (not including attorney fees).

GET TO KNOW...

Ryan Painter, JD

Ryan holds a law degree from Notre Dame Law School (juris doctorate) and completed undergrad at U of M. He has experience in elder law, probate law, criminal law, as well as administrative and municipal law. Currently, he is on the Michigan Attorney General Elder Abuse Task Force and a founding member of the Michigan Elder Justice Coordinating Council.

County Role

Shiawassee County Attorney

Attorney Painter is representing our County, effective Thursday November 19, 2020. He is in the process of relocating his law office to Shiawassee County to serve our municipality with esteemed legal counsel. His close-to-home approach will be an asset to our county government.

Personally

Ryan & Family

Ryan and his wife, Heather, are life long residents of Shiawassee County. They live on the north side of Owosso with their two children, Noah, 6, and Ella, 5. He is very interested in historical preservation, local economic development, and looks forward to working closely with the Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership.

Commissioner McMaster's Farewell

As my second and last term, at least in the near future, serving as District 2 County Commissioner draws to a close it is only appropriate to thank fellow commissioners and county employees who helped make the last four years very productive despite many challenging obstacles. Without their leadership and support I would have been on a lonely distant island and ineffective as an elected official. Despite ongoing fiscal issues, a local natural disaster, a national pandemic, and frequent changes in administrative staff I have been able to be part of an innovative team that has brought necessary reforms to increase operational efficiency and fiscal soundness in Shiawassee County government.

Throughout my career I have from time to time come under attack by sideline critics and often turned to Theodore Roosevelt's most famous political speech *The Man in the Arena* for motivation and reassurance. This speech has kept me going every month as we worked together as a team to tackle reform and end the tiresome mantras of "business as usual" and "this is the way it has always been done." I knew from the beginning that serving as a commissioner was going to be no easy task and welcomed the challenge. The success and victories achieved in the name of good government have far outweighed the few failures and losses. As for the critics ranging from print and social media, disgruntled county employees, and angry uninformed constituents I offer my sincere appreciation as your efforts to block reform kept me working hard and battling in "The Arena" for the betterment of our community.

I have chosen to depart elected public service and may return again in the future. For now, other commitments like the jail garden, service on executive boards of several statewide conservation organizations, and writing shall be my primary focus. As I have often stated to colleagues and the public during commissioner meetings, "there will be more to come...."



2021 Board of Commissioners

District 1

Marlene Webster (R)

989.413.7342

mwebster@shiawassee.net

District 1 includes Fairfield, Middlebury, Owosso Pct. 1 & 2 and Rush Townships and City of Owosso 1-1

District 2

Greg Brodeur (R)

989.725.1725

gbrodeaur@shiawassee.net

District 2 includes Owosso City 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, and 2-4

District 3

Gary Holzhausen (R)

989.277.6699

gholz63@gmail.com

District 3 includes Caledonia Pct. 1, Hazelton, New Haven, and Venice Pct. 1 Townships and City of Corunna

District 4

Brandon Marks, Vice Chairman (R)

810.449.3510

brmarks@shiawassee.net

District 4 includes Venice Pct. 2 and Vernon Townships and City of Durand

District 5

Jeremy R. Root - Chairman (R)

989-743-2438

jroot@shiawassee.net

District 5 includes Antrim, Burns, Caledonia Pct. 2, and Shiawassee Township

District 6

Cindy L. Garber (R)

989.627.2035

cgarber@shiawassee.net

District 6 includes Bennington, Owosso Pct. III, Sciota Townships, City of Laingsburg and City of Owosso Pct. 6-1

District 7

John B. Plowman (R)

517.625.4545

jmplow@yahoo.com

District 7 includes Perry and Woodhull Townships and City of Perry

Your Commissioner Lives Where You Live

Pinpoint your home on the map below and use the key at the bottom to determine which district the color represents.

Then, refer to the left side of the page to learn the name and contact information of the County Commissioner that represents you and your neighborhood.

COMMISSIONER DISTRICTS FOR SHIAWASSEE COUNTY
December 2001

