

## Cass settles final labor agreement with HHVS unit

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Following a July 9 mediation session, Cass County and the AFSCME-Health, Human and Veterans Services bargaining unit reached agreement on terms of a two-year labor contract.

County Administrator Bob Yochum reported to the board, meeting July 16 at the May Township Hall, that terms are essentially the same as those approved for bargaining units that have already settled (Courthouse, Highway, Deputies and Jail, Dispatch and Records).

Employees will get 2.5 percent base wage increases plus steps for calendar years 2013 and 2014; and health and pay plan changes identical to other units.

The HHVS agreement includes new language on variable work schedules for new non-exempt employees hired on or after Aug. 1, 2013. They will be offered a variable work schedule (flex time) at the discretion of the department head.

Yochum said AFSCME informed him that HHVS approved the agreement July 12. The board also unanimously accepted the agreement.

All employee bargaining units have now settled their contracts. Elected officials (county attorney, sheriff and recorder), probation officers and non-union employees have also agreed on the same terms for 2013 and 2014.

County Auditor-Treasurer Sharon Anderson reported back on updating Cass's business subsidy criteria policy and a related request made June 18 for Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for the Reed's Family Outfitters Distribution Center project in the Walker Industrial Park.

A public hearing will be held at 9 a.m. at the Aug. 6 board meeting at the courthouse in Walker to first discuss the policy itself and if approved, then to discuss Reed's TIF request.

In the policy's draft version, five business subsidy criteria are listed: quality job creation; attraction or retention of new business; essential services; tax base; prevention of slum and blight.

Projects proposed must meet one or more criteria, but an increase in tax base cannot be the only criteria satisfied by the project.

Cass County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) Director Gail Levenson reported on June activity. The EDC fielded 60 calls for economic development assistance and worked with 29 businesses or on projects. The EDC helped eight businesses locate potential sites and five new projects started Small Business Development Corporation counseling through the office to develop an expansion plan.

Since July 2012, 10 businesses have been completed, 41 new jobs created with an investment of slightly over \$3.6 million. Five are new businesses, two are expansions and two are purchases retaining jobs.