

## *Newaygo County Board of Commissioners*

# E-mail generates questions

By Ken DeLaat

At a Jan. 22 meeting, the Newaygo County Board of Commissioners heard a presentation by Sandeep Dey, Executive Director of the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission.

WMSRDC is the planning and development agency serving the counties of Newaygo, Oceana, Lake, Mason and Muskegon.

Following the report, Commissioner Larry Lethorn questioned Dey about a recent email indicating that the organization plans to terminate its participation in the West Michigan Regional Prosperity Initiative Project.

The initiative is a voluntary competitive grant process that is included in the governor's fiscal year 2014 executive budget recommendation to encourage local private, public and non-profit partners to work together to create vibrant regional economies. The west Michigan region involves the counties served by WMSRDC

along with Ionia, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm, Osceola, Ottawa, Barry and Allegan counties.

"It was not written in the best language," said Dey in reply to Commissioner Lethorn's query.

"It was written by you," said Lethorn.

"It was not what I was trying to say," Dey replied.

"What were you trying to say?" Lethorn asked.

After a bit of back and forth Dey asked: "Did I answer your question?"

"I'm not sure," replied Lethorn.

"I don't know what the issue here is," Dey said before Commissioner Chris Ortwein intervened to remind the board of an upcoming meeting of the WMSRDC board. Commissioner Ortwein and Commissioner Jim Maike serve on the WMSRDC board. Ortwein said that the West Michigan Regional Prosperity Initiative Project will be discussed.

In other business, the board approved the submission of a grant to the Fremont Area

Community Foundation for the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program. Court Administrator Worth Stay and Deputy Director Wendy Jarvis provided information about the program and efforts to recruit volunteers.

CASA volunteers are appointed by judges to watch over and advocate for abused and neglected children, to make sure that children do not get lost in the overburdened legal and social service system or languish in inappropriate group or foster homes. Volunteers stay with each case until it is closed and the involved child is placed in a safe, permanent home. For many abused children, their CASA volunteer will be the one constant adult presence in their lives.

The board also approved a grant application for funds for the construction of additional camping cabins at the county parks.

Commissioners also appointed Steve Johnson to the Tax Allocation Board.