



MEMBER OF
MONROE COUNTY LANDLORD ASSOCIATION
MICHIGAN RENTAL HOUSING ASSOCIATION

January 22, 2026

President:	LeRoy Peters	777-6017
Vice President:	Scott Bredschneider	777-6565
Treasurer:	Connie Ammerman	730-3826
Asst Treasurer	Barb Runyon	289-4273
Newsletter Editor:	Debbie Peters	457-5086
Secretary:	Victoria Simonelli	693-7379

Guest Speaker: Judge Michael Brown

Meeting called to order at 7:16 by President LeRoy Peters

I. Judge Michael Brown

- A. Monroe County Judge for seven years
- B. Previous Monroe County Assistant Prosecutor

II. COVID Aid & Restrictions

- A. It has been more difficult on landlords since COVID
- B. Financial aid for tenants due to COVID has dried up
- C. Restrictions put in place for evictions during COVID were not removed
- D. [Administrative Order 2020-17](#)

III. Eviction Proceedings

- A. If you have an LLC, you must appear with a lawyer. Members without a law license may not represent the LLC in court. If plaintiff appears without a lawyer, court will be adjourned for at least seven days. This is a Michigan Supreme Court ruling.
- B. If a lawyer is filing the paperwork, it must be done electronically now. If the plaintiff is filing the paperwork, it can still be done in person.
- C. Eviction cases are now held via Zoom. If tenant contests the eviction, it becomes in-person.
- D. Criminal cases take priority over evictions – this may cause delays in eviction trials
- E. At the first eviction hearing, the judge must stay the case for fourteen days unless there is a consent judgment. This allows tenants time to seek financial aid, even if they



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decline. This does not apply if a notice to quit has been given (eviction for something other than non-payment of rent.) Once the tenant has applied for aid, the judge must stay an additional fourteen days (28 days to seek and obtain aid.)

F. If the defendant doesn't appear, the judge can adjourn for seven days

1. Plaintiff can pay court to send a second summons – if the tenant again does not appear, the plaintiff may seek a default judgment

G. Once the stays are completed and the hearings have resumed, the plaintiff can ask for a judgment if there is no triable case – for instance, if the defendant is simply asking for more time and not contesting the eviction

H. If there are squatters (no lease in place), the sheriff may trespass them from the property, however, law enforcement usually does not like to get involved in these issues, and everything becomes a “civil case”

1. In some cities, there are people who can be hired to move in with squatters and attempt to make it undesirable, so that the squatters leave.

2. Homeowners may not use what the law considers to be “self help” to remove a tenant or squatter

I. Once the hearing was found in favor of the plaintiff, the judge gives the defendant ten days to leave the premises.

1. Writ of eviction

- a. If the defendant has not left within ten days, the plaintiff may ask the court for a writ of eviction
- b. These are usually sent electronically to the judge and received by him/her within an hour.

J. Monetary Settlements

1. Landlords may ask for monetary settlements such as unpaid rent & late fees

- a. These must be listed in the complaint
- b. There is an additional court cost to do this
- c. Judge Brown indicated that landlords rarely receive the funds even if they are awarded in court
- d. Late fees must be reasonable and reflect an actual cost or damage to the landlord. They may not be punitive
- e. Monetary judgments expire after ten years



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IV. Open for Questions & Answers

- A. Connie asked about late fees – this is answered in section J – Monetary Settlements
- B. Barb asked about Monroe County having the highest eviction numbers in the country
 - 1. Judge Brown responded that this may be due to the high number of trailer parks in Monroe County
- C. Vicky asked whether, when requesting a monetary judgment for unpaid rent and the court hearings carry over to the next month, the additional month(s) of unpaid rent can be added to the complaint.
 - 1. Judge Brown responded in the affirmative
- D. Mike asked if Monroe County judges are familiar with the Michigan Landlord/Tenant Law Benchbook
 - 1. Judge Brown responded in the affirmative and stated that it would benefit landlords to be familiar with the book. It is found in the Resources section of the MCLA website.
- E. Someone asked what things are considered “damages” to the landlord
 - 1. Judge Brown responded with: Back rent, Late fees, Unpaid utilities, and physical damage to the property
- F. Lynette asked if Judge Brown was familiar with Cash for Keys
 - 1. Judge Brown responded in the affirmative and that he has heard it is sometimes effective
- G. LeRoy asked about serving court documents
 - 1. Judge Brown responded that anyone that is not affiliated with the case may serve documents
- H. Someone asked how to legally enter and re-rent the property if it is abandoned by the tenant
 - 1. Judge Brown responded that you can evict or enter “due to a health or safety hazard” using freezing pipes as a reason
- I. Barb expressed concern over changes to the computer system at the court house regarding background checks via searching for Monroe County cases
 - 1. Judge responded that this can be done online now (website link is under Resources on the MCLA website).
- J. Someone asked about tenants claiming uninhabitability as a reason for not paying rent



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1. Judge Brown responded that if a tenant chooses to do that, then they must keep the rent in an escrow account to be paid to the landlord once the issue has been resolved. Most tenants do not know this. Judge Brown indicated that he had one court case involving cockroaches where a defendant actually did put rent into escrow.
- K. Connie asked if a landlord had a no pet policy, and a tenant brought in a pet after the lease was signed, if Judge Brown would uphold that lease
 1. Judge Brown responded that he would uphold the lease. This includes all breakage of the lease, including smoking in a non-smoking unit, provided the landlord has proof.
- L. Vicky asked how permissible text messages, emails, and other forms of electronic communication are in court.
 1. Judge Brown responded that the messages would have to be authenticated – usually the defendant will admit that the messages are true and accurate
- M. Mike asked the group what he would do about a Section 8 tenant that has clogged sewer line with toilet paper four times in one month
 1. Bredschneiders indicated they would issue a 30 day quit notice and file for eviction provided plumbing maintenance is tenant responsibility in the lease

V. Reminders

- A. 2026 MCLA dues are owed
- B. MCLA website can be found at <https://www.mcla.mvrentals.org>

VI. Conclusion

- A. Motion to adjourn made by Scott Bredschneider
- B. Second motion made by Lisa Iott
- C. Meeting adjourned, 7:57 PM

Attendees:

Mike & Victoria Simonelli, Jeff & Lynette Fisher, Susan Hutchison, Connie Ammerman, Collin M, Scott & Carolyn Bredschneider, Aurora & Anastasia Bredschneider, LeRoy & Debbie Peters, Carrie Crockett, Arnold Bredschneider, Barbara Runyon, Tom Wagner, Dave Endresak, John & Nina Hana, Don & Lisa Iott