



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

April 5, 2023

WORKING SESSION

I ROLL CALL

A session of the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners was held at the Administration Building, in the City of Ann Arbor, Michigan, on April 5, 2023.

The meeting was called to order at 05:31 PM by Comm. Somerville, Chair of the Board of Commissioners Working Session.

Members Present:	Comms. Shannon Beeman, Justin Hodge, Andy LaBarre, Crystal Lyte, Jas Yousef Rabhi, Caroline Sanders, Annie Somerville, Katie Scott.
Members Absent:	None.
Others Present	County Administrator, Greg Dill; Michelle Billard and Michael Auten, Corporal Asberry Payne, Racial Equity; Tina Gavalier, Catherine Jones-Alther, Brady Terrence Williams, County Administration; Jason Fee, Facilities Management Relations; Patricia Reilly, Clerk's Office; and members of the public.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

III. REPORT FROM THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

None.

IV. REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS LIAISON

None.

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Commissioner Somerville called a recess to allow the Commissioners to review the Priority Survey Responses Presentation.

Commissioner Somerville called the meeting back to order at 5:45 p.m.

Topic: Promote and Improve Human Services Delivery

- Commissioner LaBarre supported Human Services as a top priority.
- Commissioner Rabhi wanted to point out item #5 only got three votes, but is just as important and would like more business entities to bring more longer term revenue to develop funding streams.

- Commissioner Scott commented that some of the buckets of items overlapped and recognized that organizing the items had to be difficult. She said that the board should focus on what we need to do to get these priorities accomplished.
- Commissioner Hodge explained that items are cross-cutting and agreed with what had been mentioned.

Commissioner Somerville thanked everyone for discussion and said further discussion will be expanded at the retreat.

Topic: Provide Good Government

- Commissioner Scott mentioned the importance of transparency in budgeting.
- Commissioner Rabhi talked about "staffing up" the open positions and committees.
- Commissioner LaBarre echoed Commissioner Scott's thoughts on budget clarity and asked if the county has the capacity to follow through on policy? He stated he would like to measure impacts as well.
- Commissioner Hodge brought up the idea of continuing to work on training for boards and commissions for parliamentary procedure.

Topic: Affordable and Available Housing

- Commissioner Rabhi explained that we are in a crisis for some time, that the commissioners should engage in another study, and a Housing Commission could help with the understanding of the needs.
- Commissioner Somerville mentioned that a working session might be needed and is excited about the short and long term need being addressed.
- Commissioner Lyte emphasized that there is plenty of housing outside of certain zip codes.
- Commissioner Beeman expanded on Commissioner Lyte's thoughts on housing areas.

Topic: East Side Community Recreation Center

- Commissioner Hodge said this is one of his top priorities and is confident that the board can get it to the finish line.
- Commissioner Sanders said the facility should be for the east side, not just Ypsilanti, for youth needs and discussed cannabis revenue.
- Commissioner Rabhi discussed parks' needs and stated that input is needed every step of the way.
- Commissioner Sanders asked for clarification on Commissioner Rabhi's thoughts regarding parks being publicly accountable and publicly run.
- Commissioner LaBarre said he would like clarity from his east side colleagues on the who, what, how and why of this topic in order to be of support.
- Commissioner Somerville agreed on accountability for all sides and appreciated Commissioner LaBarre for this continued support. She said the site is in her district and she has been asked to join a committee on parks in Ypsilanti and Superior Township.

- Commissioner Lyte said she is confident that this board wouldn't move forward without accountability and encouraged everyone to come to the recreation center meetings.
- Commissioner Maciejewski thanked Commissioner Somerville for putting out the survey and said he would like to offer his help and support to those more involved in this project.
- Commissioner Rabhi said he attends community forums and heard concerns about The Y being involved.

Topic: Develop New Funding Sources

- Commissioner LaBarre explained that the board needs to consider the impact on municipalities and other stakeholders and well as future millages.
- Commissioner Maciejewski said these are broad issues and we need to look at public mental health and take account of what we need to do to be prepared in the future. He further explained that 72 counties in Michigan have a millage for senior needs and Washtenaw is one of the few that do not.
- Commissioner Rabhi said he is concerned that putting a carbon copy of the 2017 mileage would leave certain aspects of it open for criticism. Rabhi has concerns regarding CMH and the Sheriff's Department's lack of oversight and would like this board to have more involvement.
- Commissioner Sanders stated she believes the millage should be more inclusive.
- Commissioner Somerville pointed out that housing impacts other areas, including mental health and public safety.
- Commissioners Rabhi and LaBarre said they would like to dive into the four years of data the county has on this issue.

Topic: Energy and Sustainability

- Commissioner Maciejewski stated that the county has taken steps in this area.

Topic: Other Responses

- Commissioner Scott called attention to the idea of putting in place a family leave policy and felt that we will lose good people if we do not have one in place.
- Commissioner Hodge agreed with Commissioner Scott and said he feels this is something that we can realistically make happen.

Administrator Dill and Commissioner LaBarre explained the framework of successful past retreats.

Commissioner Somerville thanked everyone for the discussion and said she would like to determine a date for the retreat. Discussion took place regarding a meeting date.

VI. ITEMS FOR CURRENT/FUTURE DISCUSSION

None.

VII. ADJOURN TO NEXT SESSION

Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. Hodge, moved to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 06:51 PM.

Annie Somerville, Chair
Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register

By: Edward Golembiewski, Chief Deputy Clerk/Register