



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

May 3, 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 May 3, 2023.

The meeting was called to order at 05:29 PM by Comm. Hodge, Chair of the Board of Commissioners.

Members Present: Comms. Shannon Beeman, Justin Hodge, Andy LaBarre, Jason Maciejewski, Yousef Rabhi, Caroline Sanders, Katie Scott, Annie Somerville

Members Absent: Comms. Crystal Lyte

Others Present County Administrator, Greg Dill; Andrew DeLeeuw, Interim Deputy County Administrator; Michelle Billard, Corporation Counsel; Tina Gavalier, Catherine Jones-Alther and Brady Peck, Finance; Human Resources; Jeff Rose, ITS; Ashley Hall, Marie Pfiefer, Finance; and County Administration; Bryce Allmacher, Clerk's Office; and members of the public.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

REPORT FROM THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

None.

IV. REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS LIAISON

None.

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Prosecuting Attorney Eli Savit gave a presentation on the Economic Justice Unit (EJU), an office within the Prosecuting Attorney's Office which is funded primarily through grants. Currently, the EJU is staffed by a single, grant-funded position. Savit shared that the Economic Justice Unit is designed to combat issues such as consumer fraud, labor trafficking and wage theft. The Prosecutor's office has both civil and criminal authority, Savit states that the Prosecutor's office can help solve issues for victims of economic crimes in a variety of ways. 147 complaints have been received by the EJU to-date. The most common complaints relate to consumer protection, housing issues, or wage theft. 52 complainants have received a legal referral or some other form of resolution. Some ongoing investigations include issues relating to price gouging,

Commissioner Sanders stated she is happy with the EJU and thinks it should be staffed by more than one person.

Commissioner Hodge noted an example of the EJU assisting with a resident's

complaint.

Commissioner Rahbi stated that he is proud of the EJU and believes it does transformative work. He commented that the State of Michigan should look to strengthen its consumer protection laws.

Commissioner Somerville said that she'd like to see an expansion of the EJU's scope as it relates to housing issues.

Commissioner Scott asked about increasing awareness of wage theft.

- B. Cheranissa Williams, Economic Development Manager at the Office of Community and Economic Development, gave a presentation on Economic Development Programs. The following programs and services were discussed:
- A Microenterprise Program, which is supported by a variety of partner organizations.
 - The Financial Empowerment Center, which is set to launch programming in May or June of this year.
 - The Job Developers Alliance, which is a collaborative of community agencies and governments consisting of job developers and others that help their clients find employment.
 - SummerWorks, which is a Washtenaw County summer youth employment program.

Commissioner Beeman asked about the County's efforts to promote entrepreneurship among area youth.

- C. Nathan Voght, Economic Development Specialist at the Office of Community and Economic Development, gave a presentation on the Brownfield Authority Program. The Brownfield Authority has contributed to 17 completed projects countywide. The Brownfield Authority commonly uses Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to help finance its projects. Revenue generated by the Brownfield Authority Program helps fund the Environmental Assessment Grant Program. Voght stated that the program can be used to help promote equity between the East and West regions of the County.

Commissioner Sommerville stated that she is excited for the various affordable housing projects under way in Ypsilanti and inquired about the community benefits process used by the Brownfield Authority.

Commissioner Hodge asked about how to bring in the various jurisdictions that don't participate in the County Brownfield Program.

Commissioner Rahbi asked about adopting a Community Benefits Ordinance at the County level.

Commissioner Rahbi asked about the private revenues generated by Brownfield projects in comparison to the public investment made in those projects.

Commissioner Beeman asked about Brownfield Authority Program's impact on job creation.

Commissioner LaBarre asked about how the County benefits from the City of Ann Arbor's partnership with the Brownfield Authority.

Commissioner Rahbi thanked Voght for his work.

. ITEMS FOR CURRENT/FUTURE DISCUSSION

Commissioner Hodge suggested future discussion with the Economic Justice Unit

I. ADJOURN TO NEXT SESSION

Comm. Justin Hodge, seconded by Comm. Andy LaBarre, moved to adjourn. Voice vote - motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 PM on May 3, 2023.

Annie Somerville,
Chair

Lawrence
Kestenbaum,
Clerk/Register
By: Bryce Allmacher, Deputy Clerk

Board Approved: May 17, 2023