



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

November 15, 2023

WORKING SESSION

I. ROLL CALL

A Working Session of the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners was held at the Administration Building, in the City of Ann Arbor, Michigan, on November 15, 2023.

The meeting was called to order at 05:30 PM by Comm. Somerville, Chair of the Working Session.

Members Present:	Comms. Shannon Beeman, Justin Hodge, Andy LaBarre, Crystal Lyte, Jason Maciejewski, Yousef Rabhi, Caroline Sanders, Katie Scott, Annie Somerville
Members Absent:	None.
Others Present	Greg Dill, County Administrator; Andrew DeLeeuw, Interim Deputy County Administrator; Michelle Billard, Corporation Counsel; Alize Asberry Payne, Racial Equity Officer; Crystal Campbell, Public Information Officer; Tina Gavalier & Catherine Jones-Alther, Finance; Brady Peck, Director of Operations; Guillermo Hernandez, Director of Human Resources; Jasone Fee, Facilities Management; Ashley Hall, BOC Communications and Operations Manager; Bryce Allmacher, Clerk's Office; and members of the public.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Jane Vogel requested that the Board allocate funding to implement the Washtenaw Resiliency Plan.

Kris Olsson spoke in support of implementation of the Washtenaw Resiliency Plan.

III. REPORT FROM THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

IV. REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS LIAISON

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Shamar Herron, Executive Director of Michigan Works! Southeast, gave a report on MWSE's work in their region.

Herron said that population degrowth is a major driver of economic decline in Southeast

Michigan.

Herron stated that since the agency moved to its Ellsworth Rd. location, customer and service delivery has slightly increased.

Herron spoke about programs which deliver services to youth, incarcerated individuals, and individuals at elevated risk of interacting with the criminal justice system.

MWSE delivered over \$10 million in grant funding to Washtenaw County organizations in 2022.

Herron requested that the Board assist in conducting outreach for MWSE's programs.

Comm. Sanders asked which schools the youth services programs are operating in; Sanders asked for an example of a family support service.

Herron said that MWSE recently provided funding to prevent a family's home from being foreclosed; the youth services programs primarily serve at-risk students.

Comm. Hodge asked about the potential for MWSE moving back to Ypsilanti, asked about efforts to communicate with the community regarding the move.

Herron said that MWSE is interested in extending its outreach through various access points throughout the region; Herron stated that the lease at the Ellsworth location is long-term.

Comm. Somerville asked about MWSE's preparations for an aging workforce.

Herron said that efforts are ongoing to liaise with State officials working on preparing for a different kind of workforce.

- B. Ed Golembiewski, Chief Deputy Clerk/Register and Director of Elections, gave a report on early voting implementation and expanded voting rights in Michigan.

Golembiewski summarized the new methods to cast and return a ballot in Michigan.

Golembiewski stated that voters now have the option to sign up to receive an absentee ballot for every election in perpetuity.

Golembiewski detailed voters' rights to cast their ballots in-person, prior to election day.

23 out of 27 County municipalities will participate in a County-coordinated early voting plan. Ypsilanti Township, the City of Ann Arbor, Bridgewater Township, and the City of Milan will implement early voting independently.

The County-coordinated plan delivers 5 distinct early voting sites, with 4 sites serving a specific region, and a single central site serving all 23 participating municipalities at the Washtenaw County Learning Resource Center.

Golembiewski stated that the County Clerk's role is to serve as overall coordinator for

early voting, the County Election Commission will approve early voting sites, hours, and pollworkers, while City and Township clerks will assist with poll worker recruitment and assist the County with general early voting administration.

Golembiewski noted that Scio Township successfully conducted early voting for the November 7, 2023 election.

Golembiewski detailed outreach efforts to make voters aware of new voting opportunities under the County's EV plan.

Comm. Hodge asked why the 4 excluded municipalities chose not to participate in the County-coordinated plan.

Golembiewski stated that the City of Ann Arbor has the resources and desire to implement early voting independently, Bridgewater Township neglected to participate due to political differences, Ypsilanti Township expressed a desire to maintain control over the early voting process, and the City of Milan stretches multiple counties, making implementation more difficult.

Comm. Beeman stated that Birdgewater Township expressed concerns with the location of early voting sites under the County-coordinated plan. Comm. Beeman asked about the impact of Manchester Village incorporating as a City on early voting in the County.

Golembiewski said that the size of the City (a single voting precinct) will make implementation relatively smooth.

Comm. Sanders asked whether the County is reviewing independent early voting plans to ensure voters are not being disenfranchised.

Golembiewski stated that the County is restricted to reviewing those plans according to Constitutional criteria; Golembiewski stated that he has confidence in the Ypsilanti Township Clerk's ability to effectively implement early voting.

Comm. Sanders asked whether Ypsilanti Township can withdraw from their independent plan and join the County's.

Golembiewski stated that Ypsilanti Township, by law, may not withdraw and enter the County's plan until after the 2024 elections.

Comm. Maciejewski asked about the process for transporting early vote ballots cast by voters from different jurisdictions.

Golembiewski stated that as ballots are tabulated at each location, voters are designated as having voted in the State's voter database to prevent individuals from voting more than once. Golembiewski detailed the security measures, which involve designees from both major parties, taken to ensure ballots are not compromised in transport.

VI. ITEMS FOR CURRENT/FUTURE DISCUSSION

VII. ADJOURN TO NEXT SESSION

Comm. Hodge, seconded by Comm. Beeman, moved to adjourn. Voice vote - motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 06:41 PM.

Annie Somerville, Chair of the Working Session
Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register

By: Bryce Allmacher, Deputy Clerk
Board Approved: December 6, 2023