



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 6, 2024

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. 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 March 6, 2024.

The meeting was called to order at 08:15 PM by Comm. Hodge, Chair of the Board of Commissioners.

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, Deputy County Administrator; Alize Asberry Payne, Racial Equity Officer; Michelle Billard, Corporation Counsel; Tina Gavalier & Catherine Jones-Alther, Finance; Guillermo Hernandez, Director of Human Resources; Brady Peck, Director of Operations; Terrence Williams, Administration; Jeff Rose, ITS; Ashley Hall, BOC Communications and Operations Manager; Bryce Allmacher, Clerk's Office; and members of the public.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Jim Clark spoke about the Circling Back peer-led support group for individuals currently experiencing homelessness and those who have experienced homelessness in the past. Clark spoke about the importance of Hospitality Houses in Washtenaw County and advocated for the County to buy property to convert into hospitality houses.

Nathan Bey said that the Delonis Center needs to reimplement alcohol and drug tests and increase security. Bey advocated for increased support to homelessness services.

Alyshia Dyer asked the Board to postpone any potential vote to place the Public Safety and Mental Health Millage on the ballot in 2024. Dyer stated that the millage framework needs to be drastically altered to direct more funding towards mental health services and other human services.

Emy Deshotel stated that they do not support the Public Safety and Mental Health Millage as it is currently written and advocated for altering its framework so that more funding is directed towards mental health services.

Dirk Mayhew stated that Public Safety and Mental Health services should be funded by separate sources.

Ed Weiser shared a statement in support of a renewed or altered Public Safety and Mental Health millage from the most recent meeting of the Huron Valley AFL-CIO.

Cindy Bo-Davis asked the Board to postpone any potential vote to place the Public Safety and Mental Health Millage on the ballot in 2024.

Brian Coburn said that the Mental Health and Public Safety millage should be altered to direct funding towards mental health and other supportive services rather than policing.

Sherrie Wander spoke to the interconnectedness of homelessness, public safety, and mental health services.

Tegwin John said that the Mental Health and Public Safety millage should be altered to direct funding towards mental health and other supportive services rather than policing. They advocated for extending the County's shelter programming into the the Spring and for the construction of a permanent shelter in the City of Ypsilanti.

Kat Layton spoke about their personal experiences in the Social Work field and advocated for increasing the salaries of Social Workers.

Monica Prince said that the County needs a comprehensive plan to support Washtenaw County's aging population and advocated for a senior services millage.

Gee expressed their support for individuals who work in homelessness services and advocated for additional resources for those struggling with homelessness and mental health.

Cynthia Price advocated for a permanent shelter in the City of Ypsilanti.

Karen Allman stated that those programs in the Sheriff's Office which support mental health represent a small fraction of the millage funds distributed to WCSO. Allman advocated for the County to place two separate millages for Public Safety and Mental Health on the ballot.

Adam Cecil advocated for more transparency in how Public Safety and Mental Health Millage dollars are distributed. Cecil asked the Board to increase salaries for CMH employees and to expand access to mental health services.

Ginger Chase asked the Board to consider root causes of homelessness and declining mental health.

Shannon Armstrong advocated for a millage that exclusively funds critical mental health services rather than policing.

Equin Sanders stated that the Sheriff's Office is not the proper entity to trust with supporting mental health in Washtenaw County.

Elizabeth Krutes said that conversations to extend shelter programming into the Spring

have taken place for many years with no action from the County.

Courtney Labingale asked the Commissioners to visit warming centers and hospitality houses, they asked the Board to engage with providers of homelessness services.

Alison Viledorf spoke about their experiences with mental health services in Washtenaw County, they stated that there needs to be more accountability in how the Public Safety and Mental Health Millage funding is distributed.

Lindsay Kulka reiterated Shelter Now's demands for permanent shelter and investing in affordable housing.

Claudia Grace reiterated Shelter Now's demands and spoke to the interconnectedness of mental health, criminal justice, and housing.

Alexa reiterated Shelter Now's demands.

Aaron reiterated Shelter Now's demands and stated that millage funds dedicated to Sheriff's Office programming are harmful to mental health Countywide.

Shihab Jackson urged the Board to consider the impact of the closure of the Ypsilanti District Library on homeless individuals and the community at large.

Des Preston spoke about violence and substance use among the homeless community.

Logan Hughes asked the Board to alter the Mental Health and Public Safety Millage so that the revenue it generates is used to solve issues surrounding housing and homelessness. Hughes advocated for a permanent shelter in Ypsilanti and for the County's shelter programming to continue into April.

Danny Bell spoke about negative experiences they have had with individual Commissioners and certain health systems in Washtenaw County.

Samuel Hayes shared a quote from the late Congressional Representative John Lewis and asked the Board to present separate Public Safety and Mental Health Millages to County voters. Hayes spoke about burnout being experienced by County staff.

Jesse asked the Board to think outside the box for solutions to the housing and homelessness crisis.

Nancy Heine said that funding from the Mental Health and Public Safety millage should be dedicated entirely to mental health services.

Daniel Burklitzer said that the amount of public comment is indicative of deep structural issues with the County's housing and mental health programming.

Written Public Comment through March 6, 2024.

Chair Hodge called a recess at 10:51pm.

The Board reconvened at 11:01pm.

IV. COMMISSIONER FOLLOW-UP TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Comm. LaBarre stated that alterations to the Public Safety and Mental Health Millage will impact the Sheriff's Office programming that is funded by discretionary sources; Comm. LaBarre stated that renewal of a flawed millage would allow for a more favorable path forward than the rejection of the Public Safety and Mental Health Millage outright.

Comm. Beeman said that only one member of the public from District 3 gave comment tonight. Comm. Beeman asked the Board to consider the millage through a Countywide lens and gave an example of how the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office provides essential emergency services to rural communities.

Comm. Beeman clarified that splitting the Public Safety and Mental Health Millage into two separate millages would require the Board to put it before the voters as new taxes.

Comm. Rabhi spoke about innovative strategies that the County can pursue to help solve the housing crisis. Comm. Rabhi stated that discussions on the renewal of the Public Safety and Mental Health Millage must center the public will. Comm. Rabhi stated that tonight should be the first step in an extended process to consider the benefits of millage renewal/alteration.

Comm. Maciejewski said that a large portion of millage funds distributed to Chelsea City have been banked as Council deliberates how to best employ those funds to support mental health in Chelsea. Comm. Maciejewski stated that discussions on this millage in his district have centered on the public safety aspect.

Comm. Scott noted the importance of being receptive to all views on the Mental Health and Public Safety Millage.

V. LIAISON REPORTS

Comm. Somerville reported that the Commission on Aging passed two resolutions relating to the proposal to place a senior services millage on the ballot in 2024.

Comm. Sanders said that the Community Action Board will be meeting every other month moving forward to allow for subcommittee meetings in off months.

VI. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

VII. APPOINTMENTS

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting (February 21, 2024). Voice vote - motion carried.
2. Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved that the communications be received and dealt with as recommended. Voice vote - motion carried. (Complete report is on file in the County Clerk/Register's Office.)

R-0006 RECEIVED: March 1, 2024. Commission on Aging: Resolution supporting a Washtenaw County Senior Millage.

R-0007 RECEIVED: March 1, 2024. Commission on Aging: Resolution supporting the creation of a Washtenaw County Office of Aging.

3. Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved that the following reports be received: Report of Standing Committees - Working Session (February 21, 2024). Voice vote - motion carried. (Complete report is on file in the County Clerk/Register's Office.)
4. Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved that the following reports be received: Report of Special Committees. Voice vote - motion carried. (Complete report is on file in the County Clerk/Register's Office.)
5. Other Reports
- A. Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved that the following reports be received: A report on contracts in the amount of \$25,000 and under from February 13, 2024 through February 26, 2024. Voice vote - motion carried. (Complete report is on file in the County Clerk/Register's Office.)
6. Report of the Treasurer - None.

IX. RESOLUTIONS

1. First Reading
2. Final Reading
- A. Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved that a resolution ratifying the application and acceptance of the 2022 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Local Solicitation from the Sheriff's Office be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.
- B. Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved that a resolution ratifying the application and acceptance of the 2023 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Local Solicitation from the Sheriff's Office be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.
- C. Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved that a resolution creating 1.0 FTE Behavioral Health Specialist within the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office be approved.

Comm. Rabhi stated that he will vote no on this item because the position it creates is designated non-union.

Guillermo Hernandez, Director of Human Resources, stated that the job description aligns with other non-union positions.

Comm. Rabhi asked whether the position aligns with CMH Behavioral Health Specialist positions.

Hernandez stated that this position's job description includes expanded responsibilities as compared to CMH Behavioral Health Specialists.

Roll Call Vote: YEAS 7 NAYS 2 (Rabhi, Scott) ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

3. Single Reading

- A. Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved that a resolution supporting the Protect My Kids bill package in the Michigan Legislature be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.
- B. Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved that a resolution recognizing the importance of literacy be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.
- C. Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved that a resolution recognizing Women's History Month be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.
- D. Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved that a resolution recognizing and celebrating Ramadan be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.
- E. Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved that a resolution celebrating Transgender Day of Visibility be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.
- F. Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved that a resolution to recognize Aubrey Patiño's years of service to Avalon Housing and Washtenaw County be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.
- G. Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved that a resolution to proclaim March 2024 as Social Work Month in Washtenaw County be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.
- H. Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved that a resolution recognizing March 2024 as National Kidney Month and March 14, 2024 as World Kidney Day be approved.

Comm. Hodge spoke about his and his family's experience with kidney disease.

Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Claims

- A. Comm. Scott, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved that a resolution authorizing the payment of claims commencing with the last previously approved claim and continuing through the date of February 26, 2024, be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

X. REPORT FROM THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

- 1. The report from the Washtenaw county Office of Veteran's Affairs was received and filed by the Board with the expectation that the VA Office will return to answer questions at a future meeting.

XI. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

XII. ITEMS FOR CURRENT/FUTURE DISCUSSION

Comm. Scott stated that she favors placing the Parks millage before the voters in 2024.

Comm. LaBarre said that he favors placing the Parks millage before the voters in August 2024, specifically.

Comm. Hodge proposed that the Parks, Conservation, and Roads millage be placed on the August ballot, and the remaining three millages be placed on the November ballot.

Comms. LaBarre and Scott expressed support for the slate proposed by Comm. Hodge.

Comm. Rabhi asked about the requested terms for the millage renewals.

Andrew DeLeeuw, Deputy County Administrator, said that the terms have primarily been requested by the sponsoring departments. DeLeeuw also stated that shorter terms allow for a proposal that would rollback any Headlee reductions that occurred over the previous term.

Comm. Sanders asked why Parks is requesting the renewal of their millage two years prior to its expiration.

Coy Vaughn, Parks and recreation Director, stated that the department has elected to place its millage renewals on the ballot in sequence so as to avoid a situation in which multiple Parks millages fail to be renewed at the same time.

Comm. Sanders asked how long the Parks department could maintain operations should a millage renewal unexpectedly fail.

Coy Vaughn stated that the department maintains a fund balance to sustain operations for one year in case of millage failure.

Comm. LaBarre stated that he is unsure of the organization's readiness to properly implement funding generated by a senior services millage, Comm. LaBarre suggested that the County prioritize building the administrative capacity to absorb and effectively direct that funding prior to placing a millage before the voters.

Comm. Maciejewski stated his support for a senior services millage on the ballot in 2024. Comm. Maciejewski asked about the prospect of placing millages on the ballot that would not be levied until several years in the future.

Comm. Somerville stated her support for a senior services millage on the ballot in 2024.

Comm. Rabhi reiterated his position that funds generated by a potential senior services millage should be leveraged via County staff and programming, not through outside entities.

Comm. Rabhi asked about the extent to which the Board can change the ballot language for a millage renewal.

Michelle Billard, Corporation Counsel, stated that in order to maintain renewal status, the Board may not alter the substance of the millage. Billard stated that data and timelines may be altered, but not the core intention of the millage.

Comm. LaBarre asked if Commissioners might submit written questions regarding the extent to which the Board may alter ballot language to Corporation Counsel.

Michelle Billard stated that Commissioners are welcome to submit individual questions and that Administration will work to collect community input to inform Corp. Counsel's research.

Comm. Sanders asked whether an outside agency has been contracted to conduct a study on a potential senior services millage.

Comm. Maciejewski said that the AgeWays (AAA1-B) needs assessment has helped inform the proposal for a Countywide senior services millage.

Comm. Sanders said that she would be more supportive of a millage that contributes to senior, youth, and family services conjunctively. Comm. Sanders stated that if the voters were to approve a senior services millage, she would prefer that it fund in-house programming.

Comm. Maciejewski spoke about emerging challenges for Michigan's senior services agencies and those they serve.

Comm. Beeman asked about the possibility of funding a senior services position that is employed by an outside agency but additionally reports to County.

Comm. Somerville encouraged Commissioners to review the resolutions sent to the Board by the Commission on Aging; Somerville spoke to specific concerns highlighted in those resolutions. Comm. Somerville stated that the County should work to build its own capacity and in partnership with outside agencies to effectively implement funding from a senior services millage.

Comm. Rabhi suggested notifying local jurisdictions of the County's plans to place six or more millages on the ballot in 2024.

1. Commissioners discussed a resolution placing the restoration and renewal of the Veteran's Millage on the August 6, 2024, Primary Ballot.
2. Commissioners discussed a resolution placing the restoration and renewal of the Roads and Non-Motorized Millage on the August 6, 2024, Primary Ballot.

Comm. Scott stated that this millage helps protect the safety of pedestrians.

Comm. Maciejewski stated that he appreciates this millage being proposed on the August ballot as it conforms with the Road Commission's contracting timeline.

3. Commissioners discussed a resolution placing the restoration and renewal of the Conservation District Millage on the August 6, 2024, Primary Ballot.
4. Commissioners discussed a resolution placing the restoration and renewal of the Mental Health and Public Safety Millage on the November 5, 2024, General Election Ballot.

Comm. Somerville said that the Board is too quick to accept budget recommendations relating to traditional policing, especially as compared to the Board's thoroughness with human services.

5. Commissioners discussed a resolution placing the restoration and renewal of the Enhanced Emergency Communication System 800 MHz Millage on the November 5, 2024, General Election Ballot.

XIII. PENDING

XIV. ADJOURN TO NEXT SESSION

Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved to adjourn. Voice vote - motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 12:44 AM.

Justin Hodge, Chair of
the Board of
Commissioners

Lawrence
Kestenbaum,
Clerk/Register

By: Bryce Allmacher, Deputy Clerk

Board Approved: March 20, 2024