



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

April 3, 2024

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 April 3, 2024.

The meeting was called to order at 5:37 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	Andrew DeLeeuw, Deputy County Administrator; Michelle Billard, Corporation Counsel; Alize Asberry Payne, Racial Equity Officer; Crystal Campbell; Public Information Officer; Catherine Jones-Alther, Finance; Brady Peck, Director of Operations; Terrence Williams, Administration; Guillermo Hernandez, Director of Human Resources; Jeff Rose, ITS; Ashley Hall, BOC Communications and Operations Manager; Bryce Allmacher, Clerk's Office; and members of the public.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Tad Weiser stated that the groups they represent seek a Mental Health and Public Safety Millage that dedicates a greater portion of funding to mental health services.

Christina Roulis stated that the groups they represent seek a Mental Health and Public Safety Millage that dedicates a greater portion of funding to mental health services.

Karen Coleman stated that they support a rewriting of the Mental Health and Public Safety Millage rather than a renewed millage with a reworked ordinance to guide implementation.

III. REPORT FROM THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

IV. REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS LIAISON

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Comm. LaBarre presented the text for proposed amendments to the existing ordinance which guides implementation of Mental Health and Public Safety Millage funds. Comm.

LaBarre noted that the Sheriff's Office is led by an elected official with mandated responsibilities of their own and that he has consulted with officials in the Sheriff's Office to draft these amendments to the ordinance.

Comm. LaBarre detailed specific elements of his proposal. Comm. LaBarre proposed the creation of an Advisory Committee housed in the Sheriff's Office to coordinate the utilization of millage funds.

Comm. Scott stated that the Sheriff does not have the authority to put a millage proposal before the voters and that she is concerned that placing an Advisory Committee under the Sheriff's purview would usurp the Board's role as the sole fiduciary of the MHPS Millage.

Comm. LaBarre stated that it is not his intention to have an Advisory Committee that is self-governing but to place community members on the Committee who are willing to speak honestly on the state of policing in Washtenaw County.

Comm. Rabhi reiterated his support for a new millage entirely for mental health services. Comm. Rabhi stated that if a separate millage is not feasible then a new ordinance should be drafted to ensure that all expenditures using MHPS Millage funds are approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Comm. Rabhi said that he is open to an Advisory Committee if members are appointed by the Board of Commissioners.

Comm. Rabhi asked whether the Board of Commissioners would have final authority on how millage funds are allocated under this proposed ordinance.

Comm. LaBarre stated that the Board would have final authority, not the Sheriff's Office.

Comm. Hodge asked whether there is interest in having appointments to the Advisory Committee under the Board's authority, Comm. Hodge additionally suggested having an amended ordinance take effect immediately to guide implementation of millage funds currently being collected.

Comm. LaBarre stated that his intention was to solicit recommendations from the Sheriff but to leave final appointing authority with the Board.

Comm. Rabhi stated that he would prefer that any Commissioners included on the Advisory Committee be seated as voting members rather than ex-officio members.

Comm. LaBarre stated that the reasoning for their proposed placement as ex-officio members was rooted in the fact that Commissioners would vote on the allocation of all millage funds at the Board table.

Comm. Somerville recommended the inclusion of a public health official on the Advisory Committee.

Comm. Somerville recommended that the ordinance include language ensuring that future portions MHPS Millage funding be allocated to support supportive housing and homelessness services.

Comm. LaBarre recommended that the ordinance include language to promote public access to data on how MHPS Millage funding is being used at the municipal level.

Comm. Somerville stated that it is difficult for the County's smaller municipalities to support robust mental health programs using MHPS funds.

Comm. Rabhi reiterated his support for providing public safety services to non-contracting jurisdictions rather than allowing MHPS Millage funds to pass through the County and onto those jurisdictions directly.

Comm. LaBarre said that the language of the millage compels the County to maintain its current framework for distributing millage funds to local jurisdictions, but that he is open to pursuing an additional resolution or MOU to rectify Commissioner Rabhi's concerns.

Comm. Maciejewski stated his support for an Advisory Committee created and appointed by the Board of Commissioners. Comm. Maciejewski said that he supports the inclusion of Commissioners as ex-officio members and supports the Sheriff being seated either as an ex-officio member or not seated at all.

Comm. Maciejewski said that he believes the Sheriff's Office still needs to be engaged with the work of this Advisory Committee.

Comm. Scott called attention to several public safety services that are currently underfunded by the County, including the community's Hazmat Team.

Comm. Scott called attention to the complexity of the County's dispatch system and recommended overhauling the system altogether.

Comms. Scott and LaBarre spoke to the interplay of mental health and public safety services.

Comm. Rabhi said that the Board still has the option to place a new millage before the voters multiple times before the levy of the current millage expires.

Comm. Rabhi recommended an expansion of general public members on the proposed Advisory Committee.

Comm. Beeman highlighted the intersections of mental health and public safety in the more rural areas of the County.

Comm. Somerville stated that there is ample support from Commissioners to move forward with the Mental Health and Public Safety Millage as it is currently written with an amended ordinance.

Comm. Rabhi asked about Comm. LaBarre's proposal to include up to three members who are primary or secondary consumers of WCSO services.

Comm. LaBarre clarified that this language is intentionally open-ended and that it ideally would include individuals who have had contact with law enforcement in the community.

Comm. Somerville recommended amending this language to "individuals with lived experience."

Comm. Rabhi reiterated his belief that decisions regarding MHPS Millage funding should be executed independent of the County's annual and quadrennial budgeting process.

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 07:08 PM.

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

By: Bryce Allmacher, Deputy Clerk

Board Approved: April 17, 2024