



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

April 17, 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 17, 2024.

The meeting was called to order at 05:34 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; Michelle Billard, Corporation Counsel; Alize Asberry Payne, Racial Equity Officer; Jason Fee, Facilities Management; Catherine Jones-Alther, Finance; Brady Peck, Director of Operations; Terrence Williams, Administration; Guillermo Hernandez, Director of Human Resources; Ashley Hall, BOC Communications and Operations Manager; Bryce Allmacher, Clerk's Office; and members of the public.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Monica Prince shared a message in support of the Ypsilanti Senior Center on behalf of Jenny Vandermule.

Courtney Vanderlong spoke to the challenges facing older adults in Washtenaw County and asked that the Board allocate additional resources to older adult services.

Barbara Niece-May spoke about the experiences of a client of Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels.

III. REPORT FROM THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

IV. REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS LIAISON

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Stephanie Hall, AgeWays, gave a brief presentation on the organization's programs and responsibilities. Hall said that AgeWays is restricted to funding activities outlined by the Older Americans Act and compared services offered in Kent County, which has a Countywide Senior Millage, to those offered in Washtenaw County, which does not

currently have a Senior Millage. Hall said that the Board's consideration of a Senior Millage is taking place concurrently with similar conversations from around the state.

Chris Lemon, Vice President of Investment at the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, gave a brief presentation on the Foundation's support of community programs focused on supporting older adults. Lemon stated that the non-profit community has the most comprehensive understanding of the challenges facing seniors among service providers in Washtenaw County; Lemon stated that services for older adults need to be coordinated more thoughtfully to avoid creating gaps in the support system. Lemon said that a structural funding source is essential to properly addressing challenges facing older adults and that programmatic solutions need to be grounded in equity and cultural competency.

Gary Munce gave a brief presentation on the services provided by the Chelsea Senior Center. Munce spoke about a program which helps to alleviate the burden on caregivers of older adults. Munce said that the Senior Center's work would be impossible without collaboration across multiple agencies; Munce stated that Catholic Social Services, Jewish Family Services, and the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation are especially vital to the work of the Senior Center.

Comm. Maciejewski provided an overview of a proposed framework for implementation of a potential Senior Millage. Maciejewski summarized his vision for an internal Office of Aging within Washtenaw County. Under this proposal, the Office of Aging would introduce a Caregiver and Disability Resource Center, a home repair program, and Aging Program Specialists. Comm. Maciejewski proposed convening an RFP Committee which would provide funding recommendations to the Board of Commissioners, layering on additional funding to local Meals on Wheels Programs, and offering annually-disbursed financial support to qualifying local Senior Centers.

Comm. Hodge asked about the rate of .5 mills which is being proposed under this framework.

Comm. Maciejewski said that a higher millage rate would allow for the County to engage in transformational work in older adult services.

Comm. LaBarre asked about the scalability of a set of programs under a millage which would collect \$10 million annually.

Comm. Maciejewski said that much of his proposal is centered on supporting existing programs and that his past work in the aging sector suggests that some of the more aspirational programs and projects would be readily achievable with financial support from a Senior Millage.

Comm. LaBarre asked Comm. Maciejewski to speak to the urgency of funding older adult services specifically.

Comm. Maciejewski said that the needs of older adults are often unseen and that older adults lack the advocates that other vulnerable populations may have. Comm. Maciejewski stated that older adult services are chronically underfunded.

Comm. Lyte asked about the millage's viability on the ballot.

Comm. Maciejewski said that Senior Millages are hugely popular in Counties across the State and in nearby communities.

Comm. Sanders asked about older adults who are homeowners but may not be financially able to support this millage.

Comm. Sanders asked about which Senior Centers would qualify for funding under Comm. Maciejewski's proposal.

Comm. Maciejewski said that Accreditations exist on which the County could rely to determine which Senior Centers would qualify for funding from a Senior Millage.

Comm. Maciejewski said that there would be a return on investment for older adults who are homeowners and vote in favor of a potential millage. Comm. Maciejewski shared several examples of programs which could limit expenses for homeowners who would receive services should this millage reach the ballot and pass.

Comm. Hodge asked about the potential for writing the ballot language in a way which would redistribute millage funds to those older adults who would be financially burdened by paying into it.

Michelle Billard, Corporation Counsel, stated that she will research the potential for such a ballot proposal.

Comm. Beeman asked about the suggestion to create new staff positions when the funds could be distributed directly into the community.

Comm. Maciejewski said that staff would be required to support a Resource Center, and that the Resource Center's role would be to direct community members to the appropriate services and programs.

Comm. Rabhi stated his support for internal programs which would be supported by this millage and administered by County staff.

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 06:43 PM.



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

By: Bryce Allmacher, Deputy Clerk

Board Approved: May 1, 2024