WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

April 17, 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 April 17, 2024.

The meeting was called to order at 07:03 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; Alize Asberry Payne, Racial Equity Officer; Crystal Campbell, Public Information Officer; Michelle Billard & Michael Auten, Corporation Counsel; Tina Gavalier & Catherine Jones-Alther, Finance; Guillermo Hernandez, Director of Human Resources; Brady Peck, Director of Operations; Terrence Williams, Administration; Jason Fee, Facilities Management; Corey Mason, Labor Relations; Ashley Hall, BOC Communications and Operations Manager; Bryce Allmacher, Clerk's Office; and members of the public.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Yvonne Cudney spoke in support of placing a Senior Millage before the voters of Washtenaw County. Cudney spoke about the challenges their mother experienced as she grew older.

   Cathy Squires requested that the Board immediately accept their notice of intent to retire. Squires stated that they are entitled to their pension as a former County employee with 20 years of experience.

   Judge Pat Conlin stated that the County's Trial Court is wholly satisfied with the performance of the Friend of the Court's frontline staff. Conlin expressed his support and appreciation for management and staff at FOC. Conlin said that the Court is working collaboratively with its bargaining units to ensure a safe and productive environment for its employees and that the Court has a zero-tolerance policy for racism or bullying amongst staff/management.

   Allison Foreman spoke in support of placing a Senior Millage before the voters of

Washtenaw County.

Jeffrey Harold stated that when the Mental Health and Public Safety Millage was passed many community members incorrectly presumed that a greater portion of funding would be directed to mental health services than to public safety. Harold advocated for either an amended ordinance or an entirely new millage which would ensure a greater portion of funds be dedicated to mental health services.

Cat Layton said that the City of Ypsilanti's Human Relations Commission is currently conducting a review of the City's non-discrimination ordinance to ensure it offers greater protection to formerly incarcerated individuals and other members of protected classes seeking housing, they stated that a public meeting of the Commission will take place on Thursday, April 18th.

Rodger Roper spoke about his experience administering the County's We LIVE program. Roper advocated for continued funding of the program.

Kristen Roberts advocated for the renewal of the MHPS Millage. Roberts spoke about their pilot program focusing on suicide prevention among local youth.

Danielle Dix advocated for the creation of two separate millages for public safety and mental health services. Dix stated that the millage fails to properly fund the County's vital CMH services, evidenced by the fact that CMH caseworkers are grossly underpaid.

Morgan Dundy stated that developing trust between community members and public safety professionals is paramount to the well-being of Washtenaw County. Dundy said that programs funded by the MHPS Millage have given a voice to marginalized individuals.

Ruth Cassidy spoke in support of a new millage funding Mental Heatlh services exclusively.

Leonore Gerthstein said that there is room for improvement in how the County's mental health services are funded and administered.

Mark Creekmore explained the National Alliance on Mental Illness's support for renewal of the Mental Health and Public Safety Millage as-is. Crrekmore stated that the millage language was clear when it originally passed and that programs supported by the millage have fostered internal culture changes in how public safety services are administered in the County.

Cornelius Williams said that the overdose crisis in Michigan is worsening. Williams advocated for funding opioid prevention programs, peer education, overdose response education, and other initiatives to limit harms associated with substance use.

Mary Campbell spoke about AFSCME 2733's negotiations with the County and advocated for the release of additional funds to support a fair contract. Campbell stated that several departments at the Trial Court are experiencing low morale and high turnover rates.

Karen Hollman stated that there are severe morale and staffing issues at CMH. Hollman said that it is necessary for the County to meet its staffing issues with innovation.

Chris Savage spoke in support of the renewal and restoration of the Mental Health and Public Safety Millage.

Marie Kanerl advocated for a reworking of the Mental Health and Public Safety Millage to ensure a greater portion of funds are dedicated to mental health services than to public safety.

Floki Ivey said that mental health programs funded by the millage are on the precipice of being transformational and advocated for additional millage funding to be directed to mental health services.

Laurie Krauth advocated for a reworking of the Mental Health and Public Safety Millage to ensure a greater portion of funds are dedicated to mental health services than to public safety.

Francine Alexander asked for an explanation as to why the renewal of the MHPS Millage is being considered this year. Alexander stated that they cannot support a renewal of the millage unless the accompanying ordinance ensured a greater portion of funding be directed to mental health services.

IV. COMMISSIONER FOLLOW-UP TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Comm. Beeman stated that individuals experiencing mental illness are far more likely to experience unwanted force in encounters with law enforcement. Beeman said that de-coupling mental health and public safety would result in far less favorable outcomes for the community and specifically for those experiencing mental illness.

Comm. LaBarre stated that he is confident in the Board's ability to reach a compromise which speaks to some of the concerns brought forth in public comment over the last several meetings.

Comm. Somerville thanked CMH employees who gave public comment and recognized the difficulty of airing grievances with one's employer in public. Comm. Somerville stated her support for an amended ordinance which would direct a greater portion of MHPS funds to mental health services.

Comm. Sanders said that it is the Board's responsibility to protect employees at the Friend of the Court. Comm. Sanders stated that FOC administrators have disciplined employees inequitably.

Comm. Scott said that it is the Board's responsibility to protects employees from across the organization. Comm. Scott thanked the individuals who shared personal experiences during public comment. Comm. Scott noted that the Opioid Settlement Steering Committee has begun to meet and could potentially consider funding initiatives to mitigate harms associated with substance use in the community.

V. LIAISON REPORTS

Comm. Somerville said that the Commission on Aging met to prepare for the presentation from the Working Session earlier in the evening.

Comm. Sanders shared that the Road Commission's yearly audit was clean.

Lisa Gentz stated that the planning process for the Youth Assessment Center has begun.

Comm. Maciejewski alerted alternates to the SEMCOG Executive Committee that he will be unable to attend the May 3 meeting.

Comm. Scott stated that the Opioid Steering Committee has examples from communities across the state for how to use funds awarded in the settlement. Comm. Scott spoke about recent meetings of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Comm. Rabhi said that the Parks and Recreation Commission received a report on the maintenance facility project at Independence Lake. Comm. Rabhi noted that the Parks Department recently purchased 2 new conservation easements.

Comm. Hodge said that the Urban County Executive Committee received a report from the Fair Housing Center of Southeast Michigan.

Comm. Hodge called a recess at 8:34pm.

The Board reconvened at 8:51pm.

VI. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Comm. Hodge opened a public hearing to receive comment on the Renewal and Restoration of the Mental Health and Public Safety Millage at 8:52pm.

   Marianne Udow-Phillips spoke in favor of the renewal and restoration of the Mental Health and Public Safety Millage.

   Luna spoke stated that they do not support the renewal of the MHPS Millage as-is. Luna advocated for the development of a separate millage dedicated entirely to mental health services.

   Emy Deshotel spoke in support of a rewritten millage that prioritizes mental health services.

   Cat Layton said that County taxpayers expect millage dollars to be directed to mental health services and services for incarcerated individuals. Layton asked for clarification as to the extent to which the millage language can be adjusted and still be classified as a renewal.

   Lida Turner-Sharon encouraged Commissioners to pressure local municipalities who receive money from the millage for policing to dedicate a greater portion of that funding to mental health services. Turner-Sharon advocated for more comprehensive reporting on how millage dollars are allocated.

   Cornelius Williams spoke in support of rewriting the current millage to ensure a greater portion of funding is directed to mental health services and harm reduction. Williams stated that public safety is best supported by reducing the number of interactions between police officers and community members.

Shannon Novera spoke in support of the renewal and restoration of the MHPS Millage. Novera spoke about specific programs funded by the millage which have supported mental health among the County's young people.

Jimena Loveluck spoke about specific programs in the Washtenaw County Health Department which have been supported millage funds.

Alyshia Dyer stated MHPS Millage funds which are directed to the Sheriff's Office need to have more stringent reporting regulations.

Karen Hollman criticized use of millage funding by the Sheriff's Office.

Ginger Chase said that the Mental Health and Public Safety Millage does not need to be renewed in 2024 since its final levy does not occur until 2026. Chase stated that the County is capable of funding the programs which have been the subject of public comment tonight.

Christina Larones spoke about their experience as a caregiver to a child with mental illness. Laronis stated their support for separate public safety and mental health millages.

Lindsay Kulka spoke in support of separate public safety and mental health millages.

Danielle Dix spoke in support of increased funding for mental health services and social housing. Dix spoke to the challenges that individuals with mental illness face in interactions with police and the justice system.

Jennifer Harold said that public safety and mental health are disparate concerns and should be treated as such.

Floki Ivey stated that the notion that public safety and mental health cannot be decoupled is problematic and incorrect. Ivey stated that increasing funding for police departments has disproportionately negative impacts on people of color and is largely ineffective for reducing crime.

Darnesha Green spoke about programs in the Washtenaw Intermediate School District which are supported by MHPS Millage funds.

Francine Alexander asked for clarification as to why millage renewal is being considered this year rather than in 2025 or 2026. Alexander advocated for more stringent reporting requirements for MHPS Millage funds and a decoupling of the mental health and public safety portions of the millage.

Comm. Hodge closed the public hearing at 9:45pm.

VII. APPOINTMENTS

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that the minutes of the April 3, 2024 meeting of the Board of Commissioners be approved. Voice vote - motion carried. (Complete report is on file in the County Clerk/Register's Office.)

2. Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, 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-0015 RECEIVED, BUT NOT ACKNOWLEDGED: April 3, 2024. Lapeer County Board of Commissioners: Resolution designating Lapeer County as a "Freedom to Homeschool" County

R-0016 RECEIVED: April 3, 2024. Lapeer County Board of Commissioners: Resolution opposing Public Act 233 of 2023, which places control of local wind and solar development projects with the Michigan Public Service Commission

R-0017 RECEIVED: April 5, 2024. Crawford County Board of Commissioners: Resolution in support of statewide ballot initiative to restore local control of land use.

R-0018 RECEIVED: April 15, 2024: Jeremy Lapedis, Washtenaw Health Project, Executive Director: Letter detailing WHP projects which have been supported by the Mental Health and Public Safety Millage.

3. Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that the following reports be received: Report of Standing Committees - Working Session (April 3, 2024). Voice vote - motion carried. (Complete report is on file in the County Clerk/Register's Office.)

4. Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, 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. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that the following reports be received: A report on contracts in the amount of $25,000 and under from March 26, 2024 through April 9, 2024. Voice vote - motion carried. (Complete report is on file in the County Clerk/Register's Office.)

B. Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that the following reports be received: A report from the Washtenaw County Road Commission on the summary of service requests for the month of March 2024. Voice vote - motion carried. (Complete report is on file in the County Clerk/Register's Office.)

C. Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that the following reports be received: 4th Quarter Administrative Authority Budget Adjustments. 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

A. Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a resolution authorizing approval to exceed the $10,000 maintenance limit, hire legal counsel, and amend the lake level order on the Portage and Baseline Lake Level District from Water Resources be approved. Voice vote - motion carried.

B. Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a resolution directing the Board of Public Works to undertake a lake improvement project for Pleasant Lake in the Township of Freedom from Public Works be approved. Voice vote - motion carried.

C. Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a resolution directing the Board of Public Works to undertake a lake improvement project for Whitmore Lake in the Townships of Northfield and Green Oak from Public Works be approved. Voice vote - motion carried.

D. Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a resolution accepting the responsibility of materials management planning as the County Approval Agency (CAA) and authorize the creation of a single county Materials Management Plan from Public Works be approved.

Comm. Rabhi asked for clarification as to what is being achieved through this resolution.

Theo Eggermont, Public Works Director, stated that the Board of Commissioners retains authority to issue ultimate approval of the County's Materials Management Plan. Eggermont stated that first level of oversight over the Materials Management Planning Committee would rest with the Board of Public Works. Eggermont said that the Board would appoint all members to the Materials Management Planning Committee.

Voice vote - motion carried.

E. Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a resolution ratifying the electronic grant application for the FY2024 Adult Treatment Court Grant from the Trial Court be approved. Voice vote - motion carried.

F. Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a resolution accepting the Laura and John Arnold Foundation Grant from the Sheriff's Office be approved.

Comm. Rabhi stated his disappointment with the fact that no representatives from the Sheriff's Office were present to answer questions on this item.

Comm. Rabhi stated his concern with the mechanics of the auditing system being funded by this grant. Comm. Rabhi said that his reading of the contract suggests a propagandizing of positive police interactions rather than an actual increase in accountability.

Comm. Scott asked about the procedure of including a grant for approval on the agenda which would offset the costs of a contract which has already been executed.

Michelle Billard, Corporation Counsel, stated that failure to approve this item would result in a more expensive contract.

Roll Call Vote: YEAS 6 NAYS 3 (Rabhi, Scott, Somerville) ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

G. Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a resolution updating the Washtenaw County Travel Policy from Finance be approved.

Comm. Rabhi asked for clarification as to what is being updated through this resolution.

Tina Gavalier, Finance Officer, clarified that this policy is being updated to encourage best practices among employees traveling on County business and said that the updated policy must take effect before the updated internal procedures.

Greg Dill, County Administrator, stated that it is his intention to shift the organization away from using County credit cards and instead to using per diem rates as a means to simplify the reconciliation process for finance.

Comm. Scott asked how staff anticipate how the policy changes will impact the internal travel and meal reimbursement procedures.

Dill stated that the procedures will be included in the Board's packet at the May 1 meeting.

Comm. Rabhi asked about the approval process for reimbursement requests.

Gavalier stated that approvals are routed first to the employee's immediate supervisor and then to the Department Head.

Comm. Somerville asked whether there is a line item for each departmental budget dedicated to costs for travel and meals.

Dill stated that each department and elected office has a line item dedicated to these costs.

Voice vote - motion carried.

2. Final Reading

A. **24-080** Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a resolution accepting the Weatherization Assistance Program Pre-weatherization grant from the Office of Community and Economic Development be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

B. **24-081** Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a resolution authorizing the grant application to support Brownfield Activities for the 300 N. Zeeb Rd Brownfield Development project in Scio Township, MI, from the Office of Community and Economic Development be. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

3. Single Reading

A. **24-082** Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a resolution authorizing the County Administrator to sign the Michigan State Police Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) grant application from the Prosecuting Attorney be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

B. **24-083** Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that authorization to exceed the $10,000 maintenance limit on the Whitmore Lake Lake Level District for repairs from Water Resources be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

C. **24-084** Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a resolution approving the 2024 Washtenaw County Equalization Report from Equalization be approved.

Raman Patel, Equalization Director, gave an overview of this year's Equalization Report. Patel stated that total County Equalized Value increased by 9.33%, or approximately $2.6 billion, from 2023-2024. Increases in value of residential properties in the County account for the majority of the growth in total equalized value. Patel stated that total Taxable Value in the County increased (tentatively) by 7.02%, or approximately $1.5 billion, from 2023-2024.

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

D. **24-085** Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a resolution recognizing Raman Patel for his 53 years of service to the County be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

E. **24-086** Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a resolution appointing Samuel "Chris" Spang as Equalization Director be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

F. Chair Hodge pulled a resolution establishing millage reporting requirements from the agenda for consideration at the May 1, 2024 Board of Commissioners Meeting.

G. **24-087** Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a resolution proclaiming May 5-11th as "International Compost Awareness Week" be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

H. **24-088** Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a proclamation recognizing May as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month; recognizing Taiwanese American Heritage Week; and the 21st anniversary of the Michigan Taiwanese American Organization be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

I. **24-089** Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a resolution requesting the Michigan Legislature support a significant increase in funding for Michigan 2-1-1 In the fiscal year 2025 budget be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

J. **24-090** Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a resolution to declare May 1, 2024 as Older Michiganians Day in Washtenaw County be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

K. Chair Hodge pulled a resolution reallocating resources for additional compensation from Finance from the agenda for consideration at the May 1, 2024 Board of Commissioners Meeting.

4. Approval of Claims

A. **24-091** Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Scott, moved that a resolution authorizing the payment of claims commencing with the last previously approved claim and continuing through the date of April 8, 2024 be approved. Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

X. REPORT FROM THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

1. Catherine Jones-Alther, Deputy Finance Officer, gave the 2023 Year-End Budget Report.

Jones-Alther stated that finance is projecting a $14.5 million General Fund surplus for 2023. Surplus funds came from a variety of sources including high interest earnings on County general fund dollars and repayment of a CMH deficit. Jones-Alther stated that the County is still experiencing unprecedented vacancy rates and therefore registering a surplus in expenditures. Finance is recommending allocating $8.6 million from this surplus to employee lump sum payments in 2024.

Comm. Rabhi clarified that administrative adjustments to expenditures from Materials Management and Water Resources budget are offset by increases in revenue.

Jones-Alther stated increases in expenditures are offset by increases in revenue.

Comm. Rabhi asked about savings occurring due to high vacancy rates.

Dill stated that Administration has begun the process of analyzing the impacts and causes of the County's vacancy rate.

Comm. Rabhi stated that while the vacancies positively impact the budget they have a negative impact on the organization's ability to effectively deliver services to the community.

Comm. Rabhi asked about how the County is preparing for the expiration of certain federal funding sources next year.

Dill stated that Administration is compiling a report on how next year's "funding cliff" will impact the County; Dill stated that the County is exercising caution in funding programs with non-structural dollars.

Comm. Scott suggested moving in-depth budgetary conversations to the top of future agendas to give the public a better opportunity to engage.

XI. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

XII. ITEMS FOR CURRENT/FUTURE DISCUSSION

1. Closed Session: Negotiation Update

XIII. PENDING

XIV. ADJOURN TO NEXT SESSION

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

The meeting adjourned at 12:17 AM.

____

Justin Hodge, Chair of the Board of Commissioners

____

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register

By: Bryce Allmacher, Deputy Clerk

Board Approved: May 1, 2024