



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

June 5, 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 June 5, 2024.

The meeting was called to order at 05:31 PM by Comm. Somerville, Chair of the Working Session.

Members Present:	Comms. Shannon Beeman, Justin Hodge, Andy LaBarre, Crystal Lyte (5:41pm), Jason Maciejewski, Yousef Rabhi, Caroline Sanders, Katie Scott (5:39pm), Annie Somerville
Members Absent:	None.
Others Present	Greg Dill, County Administrator; Andrew DeLeeuw, Deputy County Administrator; Michelle Billard, Corporation Counsel; Catherine Jones-Alther, Finance; Brady Peck, Director of Operations; Terrence Williams, Administration; Guillermo Hernandez, Director of Human Resources; Jeff Rose, ITS; Bryce Allmacher, Clerk's Office; and members of the public.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Rita Turner Sharon spoke about conditions at the Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center and said that the pool area is far too hot.

Greg Pratt encouraged the County to continue to post line-item budgets on the website to make that information more accessible to the public.

III. REPORT FROM THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

IV. REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS LIAISON

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Members of the Washtenaw County Youth Commission gave a presentation on the Commission's 2023-2024 initiatives. Commissioners provided an overview of projects related to food insecurity, addressing domestic/sexual violence, and gun violence prevention. The Commission's Voting Rights Taskforce participated in and organized various events relating to youth engagement in elections. The Youth Commission additionally developed and approved bylaws to govern the body's operations.

Comm. Lyte said that the Youth Commissioners provide an example for the Board and other public bodies to aspire to.

Comm. Rabhi thanked the Commissioners for organizing their forum on voting rights at the Neutral Zone in Ann Arbor.

Comm. Hodge thanked the Commissioners for their commitment to public service.

Comm. Scott commended the Commissioners for their public speaking skills.

Comm. Scott clarified that next year's Youth Commission will include representatives from Districts 8 and 9.

Comm. Beeman said that representatives for County government can and should come from communities of all shapes and sizes.

Comm. Maciejewski asked Youth Commissioners for their thoughts on why civic engagement is important.

One Commissioner said that the knowledge that comes with civic involvement allows for a more comprehensive understanding of social, economic, and political issues.

One Commissioner stated that improving educating individuals on voting rights helps people understand the degree to which their voice can make an impact.

One Commissioner stated that the Youth Commission connected them with organizations that are addressing critical issues that matter to them.

One Commissioner said that the Youth Commission provides an opportunity to address injustice in our community.

- B. Sarah Miller, CEO of Destination Ann Arbor, presented the organization's annual update. Miller played a video which recapped Destination Ann Arbor's initiatives and achievements in 2023. Miller spoke about the Sports Commission's efforts to open the new Ford Lake Rowing Course, the largest in Michigan. Miller spoke about the organization's collaboration with the City of Milan to create the Milan Area Sportsplex. Miller said that Destination Ann Arbor supports five union groups in hosting their annual training programs in Washtenaw County, and that a scholarship has been launched through Washtenaw Community College to fund students seeking certifications in Business Management and Sport and Entertainment Management. Miller spoke about Destination Ann Arbor's efforts to promote outdoor recreation and physical accessibility to attractions countywide.

Comm. Scott spoke about possible expansion into paralympic sports in relation to the Milan Sportsplex.

Comm. LaBarre asked about potential opportunities given the expansion of the Big Ten Sports Conference.

Miller said that Destination Ann Arbor will be sending communications to residents and out-of-town visitors leading up to University of Michigan Football games.

Comm. Maciejewski asked about challenges relating to travel and tourism.

Miller said that individuals are planning trips in shorter time frames, which makes forecasting difficult. Miller said that the organization is closely monitoring general economic trends and their potential impact on the industry.

Comm. Rabhi thanked Miller for her work to expand the organization's collaboration with union groups.

Miller said that the County is behind its peers in terms of convention space.

- C. Jeremy Lapedis, Executive Director of the Washtenaw Health Project, gave a presentation on the Project and healthcare access needs. Lapedis stated that the Health Project's mission is to help low-income and uninsured individuals access high-quality healthcare and health-promoting services. WHP representatives shared a story exemplifying the Project's social and health-related impacts. Lapedis stated that services are offered in multiple languages and extend to social and economic service provision. Lapedis stated that Washtenaw County offers near universal healthcare coverage through the Washtenaw Health Project. 6,500 County residents receive in-depth services from WHP yearly, 75% of those residents are BIPOC and 66% have limited English proficiency. Lapedis provided an overview of the interconnectedness of WHP and Washtenaw County, stating that WHP staff are County employees and that WHP collaborates closely with other County agencies like OCED, CMH, and the Public Health Department. Lapedis stated that 5% of County residents are uninsured, and that Medicaid disenrollments have exacerbated this issue. Lapedis spoke about additional health-related needs outside of healthcare coverage. The WHP will be submitting a neutral budget for the second straight year and that additional County funding is a major contributor to that fact. Lapedis stated that the organization projects a \$900,000 deficit in 2025. WHP aspires to provide services to 9,000 residents yearly.

Comm. Rabhi spoke about concerns relating to the expiration of COVID-related assistance.

Comm. Rabhi asked about the WHP's designation as a non-profit rather than a government agency.

Lapedis stated that the designation allows for increased financial flexibility and access to moneys it otherwise would not have access to.

Comm. Rabhi asked about that statement that the County offers near universal healthcare coverage.

Lapedis stated that the WHP does not have the capacity to serve all uninsured County residents.

Comm. Rabhi asked about potential costs to provide universal healthcare coverage in Washtenaw County.

Comm. Scott spoke about the urgency of addressing medical debt for low-income individuals and families.

Comm. LaBarre asked about the relationship between enrollment changes and the WHP's financial situation.

Lapedis stated that enrollment increases strain the WHP's budget.

Comm. Beeman asked if WHP has had discussions with the ProMedica health system.

Lapedis said that he would appreciate a connection to ProMedica.

Comm. Lyte asked about MDHHS's remote outreach programs impact on WHP.

Lapedis stated that additional staff for MDHHS would be helpful for both programs.

Comm. Hodge emphasized the importance of increased contributions to the WHP from the County's health systems.

VI. ITEMS FOR CURRENT/FUTURE DISCUSSION

Comm. Somerville requested that Corporation Counsel give a presentation on public conflicts of interest at a future Working Session.

VII. ADJOURN TO NEXT SESSION

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM.

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

By: Bryce Allmacher, Deputy Clerk

Board Approved: July 10, 2024