WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

August 7, 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 August 7, 2024.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Comm. Hodge, Chair of the Board of Commissioners.

Members Present:	Comms. Shannon Beeman, Jason Maciejewski, Justin Hodge, Yousef Rabhi, Andy LaBarre, Caroline Sanders, Katie Scott, Annie Somerville, Crystal Lyte(7:33PM)
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; Ashlyn Poole, Clerk's Office; and members of the public.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Nancy Heine, Ypsilanti City, President of Local 3052, thanked the commissioners who helped the union get their contracts. She expressed her disappointment with the language in the funding resolution that guarantees the non-union staff to receive the same raises that the union members negotiated for. She spoke about how it is an ongoing issue.

   Dirk Mayhew, Ann Arbor, spoke about the Cross-county contract swap between the under-sheriff of Ingham County and the sheriff of Washtenaw County. According to Dirk, they both have private consulting firms and hired each other's firm to do private contracting. He thanked Comm. Rahbi for correcting him in previous statements. He also stated that the county employs a training manager who paid himself for training as a private consultant, which the sheriff denied. He stated that the sheriff made staff take training that his firm provided through a third party.

   JoAngela Early, Ypsilanti Twp., Commissioner for the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission, spoke about some of the work the commission has done in the last year, and how it has contributed to the county. She also spoke about the new historic district that they added in Scio Twp. And its features and the benefits that historic designations provide. Joangela discussed how they were adding the first historic district to Northfield Twp. It is called Grosse Farm. She spoke about the goals of the commission and their success. She spoke about increasing staff time and budget.

Alice Ralph, Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County Historic District Commission, spoke about Gordon Hall, the largest property that is protected in Wastenaw County. She spoke about the history of Gordon Hall and the properties located on the site. She also spoke about the work that has been done on Gordon Hall and the funding that they receive. She also pointed out how the WCHDC could do more with staff having more time.

Kat Slocum, Whitmore Lake, Historic Preservation Specialist, Washtenaw County, thanked the commissioners and stated that members of the commission wanted to come and speak to the board because they were recently awarded a 170k grant for Gordon Hall. She also wanted to talk about preservation efforts from a staff perspective and the difficulties that they face with limited budgets and staff time. Kat spoke about the issues that sites who require the most funding face because they can't afford to apply for preservation programs. She spoke about her role and what the commission could achieve with an increased budget.

Dan Kelly, Superior Twp., Executive Director of the Shelter Association in Washtenaw County, thanked the county for their support. He also talked about an increase in the waiting list for the shelter and the importance of the work that the shelter is doing. He thanked Jason Fee and Nick Woods and the facilities team. He talked about the grant that they received from MDHHS and the upgrades and improvements that they are working on at the shelters. Dan spoke about the importance of the partnership between the shelter system and the county.

Mary Campbell, a Washtenaw County employee, thanked the board for helping to get the union contracts ratified. She expressed her disappointment with the line in the resolution to approve their contract that guaranteed non-union wage increases to the union. She spoke about her belief that non-union members did not deserve the same raises as union members because they did not do the same work that union members did. She asked for clarification on the language in the resolution and spoke about previous measures passed that excluded union members.

Samuel Hayes, Superior Twp., spoke in solidarity with union members and agreed with the sentiments of his fellow union members who spoke earlier. He also asked for clarification on the contract.

IV. COMMISSIONER FOLLOW-UP TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Comm. Rabhi thanked the people who came forward to speak. Stated that the labor item will be commented on later in the agenda. He thanked Dirk Mayhew for coming to the meeting providing information to further investigate. He also thanked the Historic District for coming to speak at the meeting and expressed his agreement that the Historic District is important and underfunded.

Comm. LaBarre asked for public comments in writing in order for them not to be overlooked.

Comm. Scott thanked everyone for public comment and also said that she will also comment later on the labor agreements. She also stated that some of her questions will pertain to the budget and money approved for union contracts. She stated that she understood union members frustration with the contract but emphasized her belief that union contracts help everyone earn more money.

V. LIAISON REPORTS

Comm. Hodge provided a liaison report from the Board of Health. The budget recommendation was approved at the previous Board of Health meeting. He stated that there would be future conversation about the Board's needs.

VI. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

None.

VII. APPOINTMENTS

None.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

Voice vote - motion carried.

1. Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Beeman, moved that the minutes of the July 10, 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. Beeman, 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-0033 RECEIVED: July 11, 2024, Washtenaw County Board of Health: Resolution calling on Washtenaw County to Increase Structural Investment in Local Public Health

   R-0034 RECEIVED: July 16, 2024, Lenawee County Board of Commissioners: Resolution opposing MDHHS approach to meeting the Federal Conflict Free Access and Planning in Michigan and urging collaborative development of an alternate approach

   R-0035 RECEIVED: July 31, 2024, Clinton County Board of Commissioners: Resolution opposing MDHHS plans to implement new conflict free access and planning strategies In Michigan

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

4. Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Beeman, 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.

A. County Clerk Lawrence Kestenbaum provided an election report. He stated that the election went well with around 83,000 voters, down from previous elections. He also expressed his disappointment with the early voter turnout. The county had nearly 5,700 early voters for the presidential primary and about 3,500 voters for the August Early Voting. He spoke about the continuation of early voting in the same manner as is mandated by Michigan law. He congratulated the commissioners on their renewal and spoke about the incoming county officials.

   Clerk Kestenbaum spoke about the possibility of a recount in the city of Ypsilanti City

Ward 3 because of an 8 vote difference between the winner and loser.

Comm. LaBarre asked about previous instances where there were 3 new county wide officials and asked for guidance on how to navigate this.

Clerk Kestenbaum stated that it had never occurred during his tenure. However, he expressed his wish for the three new officials to be successful and stated that he was available to help and work with the new officials.

Comm. Rabhi thanked the Clerk for his extensive work that he had done to ensure that the elections were successful.

Clerk Kestenbaum highlighted his work with the local clerks. He also spoke about his previous experience with how elections were run in the past. He spoke about Trish Reilly and Rena Basch, who had taken over from the previous Election Director and Chief Deputy, and his belief that they had moved seamlessly into their new roles.

Comm. Hodge asked for thoughts on why turnout was low for the August election.

Comm. Kestenbaum stated that turnout increased with Donald Trump's election and that the turnout has not decreased as much as it seems. Lawrence stated that there is usually low turnout when there are no major races on the ballot.

Comm. Hodge thanked Clerk Kestenbaum for his and his team's work on the election.

B.

6. None.

IX. RESOLUTIONS

1. Comm. Rahbi, seconded by Comm. LaBarre, moved to table the Single Reading resolutions and Claims. **– Approved via roll call vote**

   Comm. Beeman, seconded by Comm. Sanders, moved to enter a closed session (8:05 PM) to discuss labor negotiations and opinion from Corporation Counsel. **– Approved via roll call vote**

   Meeting resumed at 9:30 PM

   Comm. Sanders, seconded by Comm. Maciejewski, moved to take resolutions from the table. **– Approved via roll call vote**

A. **24-155** Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

B. **24-156** Comm. Beeman asked for clarification on the timeline of the roofing project.

   Facilities Director, Jason Fee stated that the roof replacement was not urgent.

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

C. **24-157** Comm. Rabhi asked for clarification on the businesses that will receive grants and how they will be determined.

A representative stated that 80 businesses from the Economic Stabilization program for COVID affected microenterprises will be narrowed down to 20 based on predetermined qualifications. She also clarified the selection process and stated that the board will not need to revisit the businesses to determine who receives the grants.

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

D. **24-158** Comm. Maciejewski asked if there was a plan for continuing funding beyond the grant and if a conversation with other support agencies about further funding had occurred.

Toni Kayumi, Director of OCED, and Ellis Johnson, Finance and Operations Manager, provided clarity and spoke about their expansion plans.

Comm. Maciejewski asked the representatives from Meals on Wheels if they would consider a site in Saline.

Representatives stated that Saline and Ypsilanti were future targets for growth.

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

E. **24-159** Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

F. **24-160** Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

G. **24-161** Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

H. **24-162** Comm. Rabhi asked if the Huron-Clinton Metro Authority millage rate would be on the ballot.

Tina Gavalier, Finance, explained that it would not be on the ballot but would be used to levy the tax collection.

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

I. **24-163** Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

J. **24-164** Comm. Rabhi asked for a reminder of where the ARPA funds were being reallocated from.

Crystal Campbell, Public Information Officer, clarified where the funds would be reallocated from.

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

K. **24-165** Comm. Somerville thanked everyone for their work on the travel policy.

Comm. Rabhi echoed her sentiments and emphasized that he was pleased with the travel policy. He asked for a refresher on what the highlighted areas meant.

Deputy County Administrator DeLeeuw stated that the highlighted areas represented changes made earlier in the year versus changes considered.

Comm. LaBarre noted that previously there was a policy where travel to states with restrictive religious laws and suggested that the board review those previous policies.

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

L. **24-166** Comm. Sanders asked about vacancies, how long they have been empty and what efforts had been made to get the vacancies filled.

A representative stated that he would investigate further to provide that information to the board.

Comm. Somerville thanked Comm. LaBarre for his work.

Roll Call Vote: YEAS 8 NAYS 1 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

M. **24-167** Clerk Kestenbaum spoke about the importance of clarifying the language of millages. He also talked about how long millages make ballots two pages which doubles costs for the county. Clerk Kestenbaum suggested removing the introductory paragraph. He also expressed his belief that two-page ballots make elections harder to administer and could raise suspicions when inevitable delays occur.

Corp. Counsel stated that Miller Canfield, and they recommended introductory language that clarifies the ballot language and says that it helps avoid voter confusion. She expressed that it is recommended that language remains.

Comm. LaBarre agreed with Clerk Kestenbaum and commended Corp. Counsel on her work on the issue. He also stated that anything to make elections easier should be done.

Comm. Rabhi asked for clarification on Miller Canfield's opinion.

Corp. Counsel provided further clarification on the opinion.

Comm. Rabhi confirmed which areas on the ballot would be changed.

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

N. **24-168** Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

O. **24-169** Comm. LaBarre, seconded by Comm. Somerville, moved to amend by substitution.

Comm. Scott commended the union for ratifying their contract. Scott asked for clarification on the language in the resolution and the way that it impacted the current budget.

Tina Gavalier, Finance, shed light on the reason for the language in the resolution.

Comm. Rabhi questioned if the administrator received authorization beyond his previous duties and to modify all funds. Asked for further language explanation.

Gavalier provided further explanation.

Comm. LaBarre thanked the staff and labor partners for all of their work.

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

P. **24-170** Roll Call Vote: YEAS 8 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.
Comm. Rabhi abstained from voting on this item due to a conflict of interest.

Q. **24-171** Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

R. **24-172** Comm. Rabhi asked for an explanation of the last "Be it Resolved" clause.

Comm. LaBarre clarified that they will be lobbying on behalf of the ideas being put forward by the coalition and to voice the board's agreement with the effort.

Comm. Rabhi asked for further clarification on a clause in the resolution and wanted to know what the phrase "this proposal" referred to.

Comm. LaBarre answered that it referred to the proposal developed by the childcare coalition meetings before.

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

2.

A. **24-173** Roll Call Vote: YEAS 9 NAYS 0 ABSENT 0. Motion carried.

X. REPORT FROM THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

County Administration Dill also expressed his gratitude for labor partners working to ratify the new contracts.

1. Director Fee commended SiRui Huang, the Finance Manager, and Mary Braun, the Energy and Sustainability Coordinator, for their work on the project.

Fee spoke about the ARPA Solar and EV Charging project and its impact on the county. He recapped what had been done previously and spoke about:

- Funding Sources
- Design-Build Solar
- Project Scope
- Current Status
- Future Steps
- County Wide Decarbonization study and update in the future

Projected start mid-fall, Projected end - end of 2025
Director Fee offered to return and provide an update after their decarbonization survey.

Comm. Scott asked about investing in Ypsilanti when the future of space was uncertain.

Director Fee stated they took the space plan into consideration and that changes could be made if further renovations could be made.

Comm. Scott stated that solar projects should also look outside the county buildings and how they could positively affect the community.

Comm. Rabhi asked for the information to be presented to the environmental council and asked in what ways others were involved. He thanked Jason for his good work and initiative.

XI. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

XII. ITEMS FOR CURRENT/FUTURE DISCUSSION

1.

2. **24-174** Comm. Somerville, seconded by Comm. Beeman moved to approve a resolution approving non-union compensation adjustments.

Comm. Rabhi expressed his appreciation for the board removing the clause regarding non-union members from the union resolution. He spoke about the importance of the labor movement. He also expressed his desire for non-union staff to receive compensation adjustment.

Corporation Counsel stated that non-union staff received an adjustment in January and that union staff would receive the adjustment retroactively.

Comm. Rabhi asked for further explanation on how the non-union staff would receive raises.

Corporation Counsel assured Comm. Rabhi that there would be no duplication.

Comm. Rabhi asked if the new resolution applied to all non-union employees.

Corp. Counsel stated that it applied to all non-union employees except for elected officials. She also clarified that the County Administrator's contract was based on the pay rate of the lowest paid employee and that Corporation Counsel's contract followed in line with non-union contracts.

Comm. Rabhi expressed his discomfort with voting yes and giving raises to county employees who had already received an increase in 2023.

Comm. LaBarre asked for additional information which would help the commissioners vote on the item. He also expressed his frustration with being surprised at issues that arise.

Administrator Dill clarified that the compensation adjustment in 2023 was a market adjustment and the funds that they were seeking at the current meeting was to provide the same increase that every other employee received.

Comm. LaBarre asked for more of an explanation.

Administrator Dill provided an explanation.

Comm. Hodge asked for the number of non-union employees for further context.

Human Resources Executive Director, Guillermo Hernandez stated that there were 271 non-union employees in the county, including the sheriff's department.

Comm. Scott asked for more insight on the previous increase given to non-union employees.

Corp. Counsel stated that non- union employees would receive a raise in alignment with the largest union.

Comm. Rabhi refined his understanding of the resolution and the language.

Corp. Counsel suggested adjusting the language in the resolution.

Gavalier explained that the language in the resolution was necessary to achieve the previously stated goals of the board.

Comm. Scott stressed the importance of unions and how they help all employees and stated that she does have concerns about the substantial raises that some of the non-union employees received. She emphasized that the language in the resolution says "equitably" and "fairly".

Comm. Somerville agreed with Comm. Scott.

Comm. Rabhi further spoke about his discomfort with the resolution and asked if the resolution applied to Trial Court staff.

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

XIII. PENDING

None.

XIV. ADJOURN TO NEXT SESSION

Comm. Lyte, seconded by Comm. Sanders, moved to adjourn. Voice vote - motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 10:51 PM

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Justin Hodge, Chair of the Board of Commissioners

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Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register

By: Ashlyn Poole, Deputy Clerk
Board Approved: September 4, 2024