



Washtenaw County Food Policy Council (WFPC)
Meeting Minutes
July 9, 2025; 9:00 – 10:30 AM
Via Zoom

ATTENDEES

Council Members:

Present

1. Julius Buzzard
2. Jae Gerhart
3. Justin Hodge
4. Crystal Lecoq
5. Peter Lindeman
6. Lauren Marquardt
7. Lunia Oriol
8. Andrew Paniagua
9. Nicholas Pomante
10. Chrissy Taylor
11. Anna Taylor-McCants
12. Kelly Wilson
13. Noelle Blasch

Absent

1. Ava HaberkornHalm
2. Preety Gadhoke
3. Brian Meko

WFPC Support Staff:

1. Russell O'Brien – Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD)

Other Attendees:

1. Mitchell Seymour (Pollinators Policy Action Team Chair)
2. Autumn Rose Eno-Klingler
3. Jenny Speyer
4. Kevin Meerschaert
5. Lakshya Jaiganesh
6. Zachary Mitcham
7. Lewis Hughes

MEETING NOTES

1. Opening/Introductions

9:03-9:15 am

a) Council members share name, affiliation, seat, Policy Action Team (PAT)/Committee, area of interest, and location of remote attendance (municipality, county, state).

Attendees shared their name, affiliation, seat, PAT/Committee, and area of interest. Council members also shared from where they are attending remotely (municipality, county, state). Council members in remote attendance:

- Julius Buzzard attending remotely from Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Jae Gerhart attending remotely from Superior Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Justin Hodge attending remotely from Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Crystal Lecoq attending remotely from Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Peter Lindeman attending remotely from Lansing, Ingham County, Michigan
- Lauren Marquardt attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Lunia Oriol attending remotely from Ann arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Andrew Paniagua attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Nicholas Pomante attending remotely from Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Chrissy Taylor attending remotely from Canton, Wayne County, Michigan
- Anna Taylor-McCants attending remotely from Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Kelly Wilson attending remotely from Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Noelle Blasch attending remotely from Wayne County, Michigan.

b) Icebreaker – If you could only eat 1 fruit for the rest of your life, what fruit would you choose? - Anna

- Strawberries, Good Peaches, Sweet Blueberries, Grapefruit, Lemon, Honeycrisp or Fuji Apple, Kiwi, Raspberries, and Bananas.

2. Agenda, Minutes Additions/Deletions/Approval - Jae

9:15-9:16 am

a) Previous Meeting Minutes (May & June)

I. Motion: To approve May 14, 2025/June 11, 2025 meeting minutes

1. **Motion: Jae Gerhart, Seconded: Lauren Marquardt**

2. **Approved: Yes-13, No-0** (13 council members present at time of vote)

b) Meeting Agenda (July)

I. Motion: To approve July 9, 2025 meeting agenda

1. **Motion: Jae Gerhart, Seconded: Lauren Marquardt**

2. **Approved: Yes-13, No-0** (13 council members present at time of vote)

3. Public Comment - Jae

9:16-9:16 am

- None

4. Executive Committee (EC) Announcements - Jae

9:16-9:42 am

a) Grants

- Decided not to apply for a grant from the Better Food Policy Council. The grant was designed for food policy councils that lost funding.

b) Budget Increase

- The budget will be increased to cover the Health Department's work with the council. Meeting frequency will be increased to monthly from every other month. Jae suggested changing the meetings to 1 or 1.5 hours.

c) SNAP

- A percentage of costs will shift to states depending on their error rate. The changes begin in 2028. This includes

over and under payments due to administrative errors or other. Another major concern is stricter requirements to receive benefits. The nutrition education part of the program, SNAP-Ed, will be defunded.

d) Data Center

- Justin Hodge discussed the data center in Augusta Township. It will be taking up a lot of space that could be farmland. Thor Equities is purchasing the space for the data center as well as surrounding property they intend to keep as green space. They are a private company and will pay taxes. Water and sewer lines would have to be extended to the facility. Homes along the way will get the benefit of the water and sewer lines.
- Just discussed another data center owned by the University of Michigan in Ypsilanti Township off Textile Rd. They will not be paying taxes and won't provide much direct benefit to the community. They require a large amount of water to cool the equipment and there are concerns about the daily volume. Nicholas Pomante asked if there's been any concern about heating the river with their heat discharge.
- Much of what is happening is up to the townships and outside the authority of county government.

e) Older Adults Services Framework

- Justin said they finalized the framework at the last Board of Commissioners (BOC) meeting. They will begin the process of hiring the director of Older Adult Services and creating the small office. The BOC passed a resolution that would create requests for proposals (RFP) for older adult transportation. There was an amendment that passed that would allocate up to 5% of the millage dollars toward capital improvements for agencies serving older adults.

5. Featured Presentation and Discussion: Washtenaw County Youth Council

9:42-10:15 am

- Members from the Washtenaw County Youth Council (WCYC) discussed the work that they are doing. Zachary Mitcham served as the chair and on the Food Insecurity Task Force. Zachary gave an overview of WCYC. They can attend BOC meetings and present on their work. Each year there are 3 different task forces. This year they are Teen Mental Health, Community Engagement with Police/Gun Violence Intervention, and Food Insecurity.

Two members from the Teen Leadership Program from Growing Hope discussed their activities. They work to achieve food justice in the community. There are a lot of workshops about agriculture, food and social justice, cooking, community organizing, and social identity. They also organize different events to engage with the community. Lakshya Jaiganesh discussed the Food Insecurity Taskforce in more detail. Their goal is to educate the community on food access and raise awareness on food insecurity in Washtenaw County. The main event for this year was a joint event with the Growing Hope Leadership Program called Fighting Food Insecurity: One Bowl of Ramen at a Time. The WCYC educated attendees about Growing Hope and the resources they provide. WCYC members talked about how the program has affected them.

WCYC members answered questions from the council. They discussed teen food insecurity and the stigma that comes from that. They also talked about raising awareness on food pantries and other resources already available. Some advice they would give about highlighting youth doing amazing work would be having a better presence in schools and giving youth a space to talk with other youth with the same passions for change. Other effective methods to reach youth on food insecurity issues were discussed.

6. Round Robin

10:15-10:26 am

a) PAT Updates

- **Food Access & Nutrition (FAN) PAT – Andrew**
 - Andrew Paniagua said they talked about creating informational 1 pagers for organizations throughout the

county. They also discussed the Senior Millage and food sovereignty policies. There was discussion about the Cottage Food Bill that was held up in the senate.

- **Pollinators PAT – Mitch**

- None.

- **Farmers PAT - PAT not currently active; looking for new Chair**

- Let us know if you are interested in being this PAT's Chair.

- **Food Waste & Packaging PAT- Noelle**

- Noelle Blasch said they are working on a formal way for excess food from Washtenaw County events to be directed to food pantries. They are looking for guidelines on writing a resolution and will discuss with Commissioner Hodge.

- **Inclusive Food Justice – Ava**

- None.

- **Planning & Zoning PAT - PAT not currently active; looking for new Chair**

- Let us know if you are interested in being this PAT's Chair.

b) Things on the horizon, important updates from councilmembers

- None.

7. Open Comment (Council Members and Public)

10:26-10:29 am

a) Reminder!! No meeting in August.

b) Crystal Lecoq asked about fundraising. Jae Gerhart said the council doesn't raise funds but can spread the word about organizations fundraising.

8. Adjourn

10:29 am

ACTION ITEMS

- Russ will email members the link to the BOC meeting website.

RECORDED VOTES

1. **Motion 1:** To approve May & June 2025 meeting minutes

a. Approved: Yes-13, No-0

2. **Motion 2:** To approve July 2025 meeting agenda

a. Approved: Yes-13, No-0

CHAT TRANSCRIPT

09:07:47 From Peter Lindeman to Everyone:

FYI - having some tech issue, should be back on soon!

09:20:37 From Chrissy Taylor, JFS of Washtenaw County to Everyone:

The error rates includes over and under payments

09:21:55 From Nick Pomante to Everyone:

The bill expands SNAP work requirements to include more individuals. Able-bodied adults ages 55 through 64 without dependent children, parents of children aged 14 and older, veterans, people experiencing homelessness, and former foster youth will now be subject to work requirements (at least 20 hours per week of work, volunteering, or training).

10:01:41 From Mitchell Seymour to Everyone:

Stepping away for 15-20 min

10:10:16 From Jenny Speyer (she/her) to Everyone:
to get a hold of Growing Hope Teens: jenny@growinghope.net
Kelly Wilson (she/her) - Trinity Health, Lauren Marquardt (she/her): 

10:10:25 From Jenny Speyer (she/her) to Everyone:
to get a hold of WCYC: speyerje@msu.edu
Kelly Wilson (she/her) - Trinity Health, Lauren Marquardt (she/her): 

10:12:30 From Julius Buzzard, he/him to Everyone:
@growinghope_teens on IG
Kelly Wilson (she/her) - Trinity Health: 
Lauren Marquardt (she/her): 

10:14:09 From Jenny Speyer (she/her) to Everyone:
@wcyouthcommission on IG
Crystal Lecoq: 

10:14:41 From Jenny Speyer (she/her) to Everyone:
Whoops: @washcountyyouthcommission
Kelly Wilson (she/her) - Trinity Health: 

10:19:14 From Lunia Evodie Oriol to Everyone:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nV-2J5Q1lpbwn2WO3QUNsDBXJOfm4JgZFYQHGFbOEeE/edit?tab=t.0>