



## Administrator's Message

*Verna McDaniel*

GREETINGS EVERYONE. Welcome to 2011. A new year and new possibilities. A wonderful and encouraging evening was had by all who had the privilege to attend the swearing in of the Board of Commissioners, including our four new commissioners – Alicia Ping, Yousef Rabhi, Dan Smith and Rob Turner – on January 5<sup>th</sup>. The pride of their families and friends was wonderful to witness. The new board appears to be on track to make some real progress for all Washtenaw County residents. Congratulations to our new commissioners, we wish them and their families well in the New Year.

I would like to commend our outgoing Board Chair Rolland Sizemore and the rest of the Board leadership team for their leadership through a time of economic uncertainty amid the national recession's devastating impact on local government. Thank you, Commissioners, for your leadership and outstanding work.

Every New Year comes with a new set of challenges, and 2011 will be no different. We have a lot of work ahead of us. I am honored to serve as your County Administrator and I look forward to working alongside the new Board leadership team as we move this organization forward.



## News from the *Administrator*

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## NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS WITH A TWIST



It's that time of year again and the topic of making resolutions is rolling off of the tongues of many. It seems that the same resolutions dominate the discussion year after year. Without reinventing the traditional list of New Year's resolutions, I thought it'd be

interesting to put a County twist on the most popular resolutions and consider the following for the New Year ahead:

**Spend more time with family** – Why do we need to put so much pressure on ourselves? We should instead work towards a healthy work-life balance. The best work-life balance is different for each of us because we all have different priorities and different lives. However, at the core of an effective work-life balance there are two key concepts that are relevant to each of us: daily **achievement** and **enjoyment**. Life will deliver the value and balance we desire when we are achieving and enjoying something every single day in *all* the important areas that make up our lives, such as family.

**Fit in fitness** – Whether you realize it or not, this organization is guided by our underlying core values. These underlying values guide our decision-making process, help establish our goals and give us a sense of purpose. The commitments we've made over the years to our Guiding Principles, Core Competencies and Continuous Improvement have become the foundation of the core strength of this organization. The Board will soon engage in a process to set their priorities, adding one more layer to the foundation that directs the work we do.

**Tame the bulge** – We live in an age of excess consumption, unmerited expectations, unbridled greed, and an unfounded sense of entitlement. We suffer from cultural narcissism, but it doesn't have to be this way. For me, this boils down to understanding the difference between a need and a want. We don't need everything we want. The line has, in fact, become blurred between the two. We need to embrace the fact that what was previously a need, may now be a want given our economic reality.

**Quit smoking** – We need to dissolve the culture of mistrust within this organization. No more blowing smoke by blaming others. I will continue to communicate openly and honestly with you and I expect the same in return. The dialogue between this office and each of you is critical as we navigate these tough times. As the economy influences what we do here and what we can do, you have my personal commitment that we will be as upfront as possible,

communicating as often as possible about any changes that might affect you, our employees, or the services we offer.

**Quit drinking** – Stop drinking the Kool-Aid! There will always be rumors and naysayers, but we have a choice to buy-in or not. Just because you hear something it doesn't make it a fact. Ask the tough questions and I'll tell you the truth. No one is perfect and we will all make mistakes, but I hope we've built a culture here that allows us to see and respect the humanity in others.

**Enjoy life more** – Do good and be passionate about helping others. Remember why we do what we do. I've been with this organization for over 28 years and I know firsthand that you are all committed to helping others in need. We have built the kind of organization that can withstand challenges such as those we currently face. The level of strength and commitment from each of you continue to give me pause. Focus on why you chose to be a public servant; this commitment will be what gets us through.

**Get out of debt** – Debt is normal, but it must be handled responsibly. We must face the projected \$20M deficit head-on and regain our financial stability. This year, we will be proactive and focus on advancing our core mission with the resources that we have. These hard times give us an opportunity to pursue organizational change and shed outdated practices that might otherwise, seem too risky when all economic indicators are positive. We can either view this process as cutting our budget or building a budget. Let's build a budget with a targeted approach that will allow us to make the greatest community impact.

**Learn something new** – "It takes one skill set to operate a growing organization and it takes a different skill set to manage during a downturn in the economy", former Commissioner Mark Quimet. We should explore all the possibilities, study best practices and recommit to continuous improvement.

**Build better relationships** – The value of good relationships cannot be over-estimated. Building and maintaining relationships is an ongoing process, but a process we sometimes forget to foster. All of business is about people, as is life. Reach out to your co-workers, other departments, other municipalities and the community for further collaboration and coordination.

**Get organized** – We must make cuts in strategic, programmed ways and look for opportunities to improve the organization while making necessary changes given reduced resources. We know that this next budget will bring change, significant change. We'll need to do things differently, even think differently, but that doesn't mean that we discard the foundation we have – a strong foundation of trust and commitment to public service is critical to survive this economic downturn.

## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS CALENDAR



Farewells and recognitions took up much of the board's December meeting – as you may know, four commissioners have moved on. Friends, family and fellow commissioners acknowledged the work of

Commissioners Jeff Irwin, Mark Ouimet, Jessica Ping and Ken Schwartz. Many kind comments were shared about the outgoing commissioners, which inspired me to think about my own commitment to public service and reminded me of the type of public servant I aspire to be – one recognized as being humble, honest, and most importantly, a person of integrity. What a great way to begin a New Year.

In addition to resolutions honoring the outgoing Commissioners' years of service to the residents of Washtenaw County, the board adopted their [calendar for 2011](#). Decisions of the Ways & Means and Regular Board meetings, along with the exploration of topics at the Board Working sessions, lay the foundation for all the services we're able to provide. The Board plays a critical role in shaping this organization – their discussions and decisions, especially in the areas of labor and budget issues, will have a significant impact on the recommended budget I present to the board next year. The Board meetings are held twice monthly, and are crucial to the work we do: I hope you find the time to either attend the meetings or [take in a webcast](#). Be sure to take a look at the [agendas](#) or [minutes](#) online.

The departmental materials presented to the Board will also have significant importance as the Board considers the critical issues before them. Please remember to work with your Budget Analysts and be mindful of the [submission deadlines](#). Sample cover memos and resolutions can be found on [eCentral](#). As always, feel free to contact [Joanna Bidlack](#) at 222-6731 as she would be happy to answer any questions you have about the Board's agenda process.

## CHANGES IN LEADERSHIP



On Wednesday evening, January 5<sup>th</sup>, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners held its Organizational meeting. During this meeting all eleven Commissioners took their oath of office

administered by Chief Judge Donald E. Shelton. The meeting was called to order by Clerk/Register Lawrence Kestenbaum and, after the proceedings, was closed by the newly elected Chair of the Board of Commissioners, Conan Smith. I've had the pleasure of working with Commissioner Smith as the Chair of the Ways and Means Committee. I've appreciated his passion, focus and strategic thinking. I am delighted to see him in this new role as Board Chair.

During the organizational meeting each Commissioner addressed the citizens of Washtenaw County ([See the meeting webcast](#)), offering support for the community, the Washtenaw County administration, and its employees, and recognizing the very challenging times ahead for Washtenaw County. Commissioners Ping, Rabhi, Smith and Turner will offer a fresh perspective, which will be extremely valuable as we continue to reassess the organization and shape a new reality for Washtenaw County. I'm confident this Board will work quite well together; each member drawing upon his/her expertise and experience to help the Board as a whole.

The Board's newly elected leadership was chosen at the meeting as well, representing what I believe to be a team that will harness the imagination and energy of their fellow board members, the staff and the community, tapping into intellectual and emotional resources that will be necessary as we address the challenges before us. The new board leadership team is as follows:

**Chair of the Board of Commissioners**

Commissioner Conan Smith

**Vice Chair of the Board of Commissioners**

Commissioner Alicia Ping

**Chair of the Ways & Means Committee**

Commissioner Rolland Sizemore

**Vice Chair of the Ways & Means Committee**

Commissioner Dan Smith

**Chair of the Working Session**

Commissioner Yousef Rabhi

**Vice Chair of the Working Session**

Commissioner Rob Turner

## POAM AGREED TO CONCESSIONS

During 2009, much of the County-wide organization, including AFSCME Local 2733, AFSCME Local 3052, Michigan Nurses Association, Assistant Prosecutors Association, Public Defenders Association, and the Non-Union Groups, made concessions in both pay and benefits to assist with the County-wide deficit, resulting in a **\$4,131,670** reduction to the general fund outlays for 2010 and 2011.

By now, many of you have probably read that the Police Officers Association of Michigan (POAM) has agreed to concessions for 2011 and beyond. Facing a structural deficit projected at \$20 million and climbing over the next budget cycle (2012-2013), we asked POAM to forgo a two percent (2%) negotiated increase planned for 1/1/2011. After a great deal of discussion and tremendous leadership from Sheriff Clayton, POAM leadership and Human Resources and Labor Relations Director Diane Heidt, we were able to reach a tentative agreement with the following elements:

	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Wages</b>	0%	0%	1%	1%
	\$376,606	\$913,436	\$1.3M	\$1.5M
<b>Premium Sharing</b>			\$50/mo \$168,000	\$50/mo \$168,000

<b>Total Estimated Savings</b>	<b>\$4,426,042</b>
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The estimated savings will result from reductions to originally budgeted outlays in the area of wages, as well as increased contributions to premium sharing that will be made by the membership to reduce the medical fund costs.

The most significant part of this agreement is the structural impact for all years. Therefore, by forgoing wage increases for 2011 and 2012, the savings will compound on an annual basis. Additionally, the implementation of premium sharing will have a positive impact on compliance with Health Care Reform.

This tentative agreement was ratified by the POAM membership a few weeks ago. Of the 244 members of the bargaining unit, a total of 201 ballots were cast. Ninety-two percent (92%) of the votes cast were favorable to accepting the agreement.

The resolution to finalize this agreement will go before the Board for their approval at the January 19, 2011 meeting. I'm delighted with this agreement, and represents great work from everyone involved and a great way to kick off the new year!

## 2011 BANKED LEAVE/FURLOUGH DAYS



We are now into the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of banked leave time / furlough days for the organization. Therefore, with the paycheck of 1/7/11, employees should recognize

these hours on their paycheck for use throughout 2011. These hours, both banked leave time or furlough days, are made possible through the cooperation and commitment of union and non-union employees alike as part of 2009 concessionary negotiations. These agreements assisted Administration in bringing forward a balanced budget for 2010 & 2011. As part of the agreement, eight (8) days shall be taken throughout the year, of which four (4) are designated for County and Court-wide closure. The days that have been designated for 2011 are:

- **Friday, May 27, 2011**
- **Friday, July 1, 2011**
- **Friday, September 2, 2011**
- **Friday, December 23, 2011**

As this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the banked leave/furlough day program, employees need to be diligent in the use of such time. There were some occurrences in 2010 in which employees either did not use all of the time in their banks, or used too much, resulting in vacation & sick time accruals to be transferred to cover the negative balances. In the case of excess time remaining at the end of 2010, these hours were rolled forward to 2011 for use.

Therefore, I am requesting that these hours be more closely monitored in 2011 as all hours will need to be exhausted by the end of 2011. The "floating" days should be used prior to any sick or vacation time being deducted from accrual banks.

Again, thank you for your continued goal of excellence in providing service delivery to the citizens of Washtenaw County. The agreements reached, and leadership shown, allows us to continue to provide service to all citizens of the County in the areas of public safety and justice, human services, environment and land use, civic infrastructure, as well as support services, many of which are our most venerable citizens and in need of such services.

## PLANNING ADVISORY TEAM UPDATE

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The Planning Advisory Team serves as the primary mechanism for planning, strategy development, priority setting and budget status assessments. The input and recommendations from this team have

proven to be extremely valuable as Bill and I navigate the economic challenges that stand in the way of our financial stability. As you may know, this group was charged with three critical goals:

- 1) Create a planning process for the 2012/2013 budget;**
- 2) Provide feedback and support for implementation of the key initiatives; and**
- 3) Create a calendar of major events for the entire county.**

In my mind, we are laying the groundwork needed for developing a very difficult budget and regaining control of our finances – this really is the highest priority to me and my team at this point.

I would like to commend our outgoing Ways and Means Chair Conan Smith for his leadership on this team and his strategic perspective. He's been an excellent liaison to the Board, keeping the Commissioners informed on our progress and bringing ideas back to the team that have helped shape the process and further develop our strategies. Thank you, Conan, for your leadership and outstanding work. We're looking forward to working with our new Ways and Means Chair Rolland Sizemore as we continue to set the direction for this organization.

I will be kicking off the 2011 Planning Process for the 2012/2013 budget with a **preliminary** Financial State of the County. This presentation will be given to the Board at the January 19<sup>th</sup> Board meeting and we're planning to share the **revised** Financial State of the County following the April 2011 Equalization Report. County leadership will receive this presentation at the January 24<sup>th</sup> Group of 180 meeting and I plan to address the rest of the organization in a YouTube video shortly thereafter.

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We are working to build a strong, financially stable organization and we need each of you to make that happen. We are passionately pursuing more effective ways to solve our problems. In other words, we are doing our best to make strategic decisions to create a better organization. Our focus is on doing all we can do to create a new reality for this organization and this community. As I think about our role in making this happen, I can't help but think about a favorite quote of mine ...

**No man is an island, entire of itself  
every man is a piece of the continent, a  
part of the main**

*Jacobean poet and preacher John Donne*

We must work together to carve out our future. I'm reenergized and ready to face this challenge and I hope you are too. The Planning Advisory Team will continue meeting in the new year and as always, I commit to share with you as much information as I can as quickly as I can without jeopardizing thoughtfulness. I hope you've had a great start to the new year.